

THE
Curse of Ulrica;
OR THE
WHITE CROSS KNIGHTS
OF
RIDDARHOLMEN.

SWEDISH ROMANCE
OF THE
SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

Chi va lontan dalla sua patria, vede
Cose, da quel, che già credea, lontane:
Che narrandole poi, non se gli crede,
E stimato bugiardo ne rimane;
Che'l volgo sciocco non gli vuol dar fede,
Se non le v. de, e tocca chiare, e piane.
Per questo io so, che l'inesperienza
Farà al mio canto dar poca credenza.
Ariosto, Ori. Fur.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II

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THE

CURSE OF ULRICA,

&c. &c. &c.

CHAP. V.

' THE WARDER'S TALE.

Is't Heaven's anger?

With penitence and sacrifice appease it:

Beyond this, there is nothing that I can

Imagine dreadful.

MASSINGER'S UNNATURAL COMBAT.

IN the reign of our good king and father, Canutson the Great, of blessed memory, the Counts of Mörner were esteemed the richest and most valiant of the knights who sustained the power and might of Sweden's crown; and yet guarded with a jealous and watchful eye

the freedom and happiness of Sweden's people. At this time, Count Sigismund Mörner was the only remaining male descendant of this illustrious house. His picture, which hangs in the long gallery of this castle, represents him equipped for a tournament, in the complete armour of a knight. If his portrait resembled him he must have been one of the handsomest cavaliers of his time. His eye is full of fire and command, his port valiant, imposing, and majestic. I have often stopped for hours in the gallery to contemplate this portrait. When the sun's rich light would stream on it from the lofty casements, methought the eye would seem to kindle, a flash fire upon me,—the eye-brows would knit together and frown darkly, and the lips curl with contempt: that look of Sigismund, it has frozen my blood . . . Sigismund ! your beauty resembled

sembled that tall and graceful tree, which lifts its gaudy blossoms to the eastern sun, bathes them in heaven's own dew, and yet distils a poisonous exhalation on all that seek its shelter! In good sooth, the vices and horrid propensities of his heart sullied the charms of his person. His mind was dark, vindictive, and cruel. He disregarded and trampled on the laws of his country, and . . . (I tremble while I relate it)...he despised the solemn ordinances of God, and mocked the rites and mysteries of our holy religion! Yes, when I look upon that picture, I think I behold Satan clad in the plumage and celestial armour of the angel Gabriel!—The hours of night which yet remain to us would not suffice to enumerate the dark catalogue of his crimes. He was rich and powerful. From the loftiest tower of Riddarholmen, all that the eye surveyed

were his possessions;—but riches in his hands he considered but as the means to destroy, and not to bless mankind. The vassals on his estates he governed with a rod of iron. Their rents and services were rigidly exacted, and their wives and daughters were often violated by Sigismund, or by his companions, who were wild, dissolute, and brutal like himself. He trespassed even on the sanctuary which is under the protection of the Virgin; many of the nuns of the neighbouring Abbey of St. Bridget were seduced by Sigismund, and they paid with their lives the forfeit of their crimes; while he, the master tempter, was reserved, to exhibit his guilty course to the world, and to reform it by his greater and more terrible example. In consequence of these excesses, he became the terror of the surrounding country, and the curse of his immediate
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liate dependants. His rich and beautiful possessions soon became a desert, and his vassals, exasperated at his cruelty, emigrated to remote and distant shores.

Sigismund and his companions went out one morning early to hunt the bear: the course of the chase brought them near the castle of Baron Lovenhielm, which was situated only a few miles from Riddarholmen. The bear, who was wounded, ran roaring through a wood, the horsemen and dogs pursuing it with loud cries. In a few minutes they heard plainly the shrieks of a female. Sigismund, who was at the head of the train, rode up to the spot from whence the cry proceeded, and found a lady whose garments were stained with blood, lying in a green alley of the forest. The steed which she had been riding was flying away with amazing swiftness, and the

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wounded

wounded bear was making its escape in the opposite direction. Sigismund raised her up, and wiped away the blood which proceeded from a slight contusion in the forehead. The lady, who was now recovered from her fright, thanked him for his courtesy, and informed him that her steed being frightened by the roaring of a wounded bear, which had suddenly crossed him in the forest, had started and thrown her, but that she now felt herself well enough to proceed to the Castle of Lovenhielm, whither she requested Sigismund to accompany her. Sigismund felt convinced that she was the beautiful Arvedina, the only daughter of Baron Lovenhielm. He accepted her invitation with alacrity, and while his companions continued the sport, he gently lifted Arvedina on his steed, and led him by the bridle to the portal of the castle. The Baron, who was old
and

and infirm, was laid up with a severe fit of illness. His great easy chair had been rolled over to the window, from whence he enjoyed the beauty of the prospect. He had been exceedingly alarmed when he beheld the steed of Arvedina flying by the window without its rider, and he had dispatched his vassals in every direction to seek her; but he became more alarmed on beholding his daughter on horseback, led by a strange knight, when he discovered that knight was Sigismund. The fame of Arvedina's beauty had filled the land, and the marvellous account he had heard of her charms had long inspired Sigismund with the desire of beholding her. But all the overtures he had made to form an intimacy between the families, had been treated with the greatest disdain by the good Baron Lovenhielm. The character of Sigismund was well known

to the Baron, and every day some fresh outrage reached his ears, which inspired him with still greater horror for so unprincipled a man. The curiosity which Sigismund had felt to behold Arvedina was now gratified, and he felt that the account he had heard of her charms had not been exaggerated. The emotion he experienced at the sight of Arvedina's beauty he did not attempt to conceal; and he even persuaded himself that this sensation was love. Alas! the heart of Sigismund was too brutalized, to receive the pure impression of so noble a passion! The figure of Sigismund was calculated to make a powerful impression on the female heart. Arvedina did not behold the noble figure and graceful action of Sigismund, as he curbed the impatience of his steed, and led him gently towards the castle, with indifference;
and

and when he announced to her his name and rank, she intreated him with earnestness to accept her invitation, and enter the castle of Lovenhielm. Sigismund was too much enamoured to neglect this opportunity, and the horror of the Baron was complete, when Arvedina entered his apartment, leading the Knight in her hand, and presented Count Sigismund Mörner, as the preserver of her life. After he had thanked Sigismund for the service he performed, the Baron regretted in cold terms, that his state of health was too infirm to allow him to perform the rites of hospitality towards him. Sigismund was not disposed to take this hint in its literal acceptation, and he even announced his intention of spending the evening in the castle of Lovenhielm. The Baron was forced to acquiesce. In the mean time, Sigismund employed himself in gaining the

affections of Arvedina. So great was his power of seduction, and such the waywardness of her destiny, that he gained a complete ascendancy over her mind. Three days and three nights had passed, and Sigismund was still an unbidden guest in the castle of Lovenhielm. The rage of the Baron at this protracted stay exceeded all bounds; but Sigismund was not one whom it was easy to repulse.

The Baron, who saw through the designs of Sigismund, locked up his daughter in a remote part of the castle, and counterfeiting a severer fit of illness, his apartment became inaccessible to Sigismund. Arvedina had a favourite attendant, called Ulrica Gardemin. Sigismund concerted with this girl a plan, by which he might gain access to her mistress, as soon as she was set at liberty, and he immediately left the castle of Lovenhielm, breathing

ing nothing but vengeance against the old Baron.

When the Baron was told that Sigismund had quitted the castle, he ordered his daughter to be released, and brought before him. He represented to Arvedina, in the strongest terms, the consequences of her accepting the addresses of Sigismund. He painted his character in the blackest colours: it is true he did not dwell on particulars; for such was the character of Sigismund's exploits, as might not be told to a female ear. Arvedina had the presumption to resist this paternal admonition of the good Baron. It is probable, if she indeed credited any part of this account, that she was vain enough to imagine her charms possessed the power of reclaiming the dissipated and profligate heart of Sigismund. A fatal experiment! too flattering to the vanity of the sex, not

to be often attempted ; but alas ! Arvedina was too unsuccessful, not to hold out a frightful example to future ages. Sigismund, through the agency of Ulrica, saw Arvedina every evening at night-fall, in a little grove at some distance from the castle. These meetings were reported to the Baron by a faithful domestic. On this discovery, he confined Arvedina, a second time, to her apartment, and Ulrica was sentenced to share her mistress's prison. Sigismund prepared to rescue his mistress and gratify his revenge. At the dawning of day, he repaired to the castle of Lovenhielm, in the disguise of a peasant. He threw a ladder of ropes on the iron bars which surrounded the casement of Arvedina's prison, and thrust in a billet ; descended the ladder swiftly, carried it with him, and immediately disappeared. That day passed away in silence, but when

when the darkness of night covered the castle with obscurity—a cry of “Fire!” was heard. The flames burst forth in four different places . . . and soon the castle, its towers, ramparts, and pavilions, became one sheet of fire. Sigismund was at hand, and with a troop of chosen companions he surrounded the castle. He advanced to the tower where his mistress was confined, and having broke open the doors, he rescued Arvedina and Ulrica. When Arvedina beheld the flames raging so furiously, she besought Sigismund to save the life of her father; but the fire continued its devouring progress, and assistance was feebly given. The old Baron and most of his domestics perished miserably in the flames.

The reports of this unhappy catastrophe were soon spread over the country. The incendiary was even
openly

openly hinted at; and the eye of scorn and the finger of reproach marked the guilty Sigismund. These rumours even reached Sweden's monarch; but the troubles of our unhappy country at that period, the great power and influence of the Counts of Mörner in those days, and finally, the difficulty of procuring legal evidence of the crime, prevented any enquiry, and for this time justice was defrauded of her well merited victim. Sigismund conducted Arvedina and Ulrica to this castle, and in a short time the heiress of the house of Lovenhielm became his wife. For a short time Sigismund conducted himself with propriety. Arvedina bore him a son, who was named Harold, and it might be expected, that this new tie would effectually reclaim him from his abandoned courses. But Sigismund's star, which had risen under an evil aspect, was doomed to proceed
in

in the same fatal circle, and was soon about to set in blood ! .

Sigismund, with all the natural inconstancy of his disposition, had become smitten with the charms of Ulrica, the former attendant of Arvedina, who had accompanied her to Riddarholmen, and shared her confidence. He had endeavoured to win her to his purpose by the offer of large sums of money and magnificent presents; but the virtue of Ulrica was impregnable. Heated with wine, and just reeking from the banquet, he was passing one evening through an apartment in the northern tower, when he perceived Ulrica quitting the room on his approach. She ran, but he was swifter, and thrice locking the door, he turned with a look of savage triumph on his victim, and gave her to understand, that as all other means had failed, he might yet be indebted

— to

to force for this victory. Her situation was certainly distressing in the extreme. To parley was useless. How could she expect humanity from the savage lion in his den? The doors were locked. Her voice could not penetrate the thickness of the castle walls. There was a window open, for she had been watering some roses and hyacinths which stood on the stone before the casement. But the room was two lofty stories high. Ulrica still ran, shrieking for assistance, and still Sigismund pursued. She feared his savage strength, and made use of her last resource. She darted to the window, and with amazing resolution sprung through the casement! Sigismund was too late to prevent her. "I have killed her," he exclaimed, when he heard the shock of her body coming against the earth. Arvedina heard the noise which this accident occasioned,

occasioned, and before she could obtain an answer to her inquiries, Ulrica was carried to her apartment, in strong convulsions. Medical aid was administered, and, in a few days, she was recovered from the effects of her fall; but she was quite lame, and she carried about her for the rest of her days, the lasting tokens of Sigismund's cruelty, and the perpetual memorial of her own virtue.

When Arvedina heard from the lips of Ulrica the truth of what passed, she settled a small pension on her, and removed her to a little farm on the confines of Sigismund's estate. The keen reproaches which this affair drew from Arvedina were expected as matters of course by Sigismund, and disregarded by him with the coolest indifference. The domestic happiness of Arvedina was now completely destroyed, and she sought to pass the remainder

remainder of her days in total seclusion from the world. The education of her son, the distribution of her charitable benefactions, and religious meditation, became her chief employments. However, she did not totally give up all hopes of Sigismund. "The soul," she would exclaim, "is not irretrievably lost, as long as time remains sufficient for repentance, or for the performance of one virtuous action." On this account Arvedina determined to pass every seventh day in the society of Sigismund and his dissolute companions. Her presence sanctified the place; and before her the obscene jester and the blasphemer of his God were dumb.

Alas! no dawnings of virtue were perceptible in the breast of Sigismund; and for nineteen years did this pious woman labour in this manner to reclaim him! The constitution of Arvedina

vedina was now completely broken, and every moment her spirit seemed about to wing its flight to the mansions of the blessed. It was on the 29th of October that the Lady Arvedina appeared for the last time in the banqueting-room of the castle. She moved on in silence, with a majestic step, to her usual seat at the feast; her lovely face, it is said, was more than usually pale, and her eye, full of grief, fixed a look of deep interest on the scowling and grief-hardened visage of Sigismund.

“Hark!” cried Adolphus. A horn was now heard sounding without the castle-walls.

“Is it so near midnight?” cried Olaus; and presently the clock of the castle, in deep and lengthened tones, struck twelve. Olaus now took down the horn which hung over the hearth: he opened the casement, and blew a
blast

blast, so loud and shrill, that the forest and distant hills rung again with echoes.

“I must away for a time,” said Olaus, “but sit by the hearth, and trim the fire cheerily; I shall be here anon.”

Olaus snatched up the lamp, and throwing a wolf's skin over him, he descended the staircase of the turret. Shortly after, Adolphus heard a door clap to with great violence; he started, and unpleasant sensations immediately crossed his mind. He was left alone, at the hour of midnight, in a ruin, which, for aught he knew, might be the haunt of banditti. He had no arms to defend himself with—he might be overpowered before the return of Olaus, or... Olaus might be acting in concert with them.—Was it to lull suspicion he beguiled the tedious hours with his story? Adolphus instantly seized a flaming

flaming brand from the fire, and descended the staircase. The outside door of the turret was locked and bolted. "I am then a prisoner!" exclaimed Adolphus. He afterwards examined the room in which they had been sitting, and the adjoining bed-chamber of Olaus, but he could discover no outlet. He approached the casement; the storm still continued to rage; there was no moon visible, but on the white snow it was easy to discover an object. Amid the clouds of sleet, which blew violently, Adolphus perceived obscure forms passing along the distant battlements which rose above the moat: shadows he would have believed them, so softly did they move, until he heard the clang of arms: and then suddenly they vanished! A moment after he saw three dark figures on the white snow, immediately under the turret: they
seemed

seemed in earnest conversation; and that he was the subject of it he felt convinced, from their frequently pointing with animated gestures to the apartment of the turret in which he was. And now a light beamed on the countenances of one of them, while the rest stood in dark shadow. "Tis from the lanthorn of Olaus," cried Adolphus; but with this man's face, which was marked with a savage but unmeaning character, he was totally unacquainted.

When the clock chimed the three-quarters, Olaus returned, apparently in some agitation. Adolphus endeavoured to draw from him some intimation of the visitors, whom it appeared he expected at that late hour of night; but Olaus giving Adolphus an evasive answer, approached the fire, and proceeded immediately to continue the foregoing narration.

At

At the conclusion of the banquet, a message was brought to Sigismund, from the widow of one of his vassals who demanded an audience. He desired the person to be shewn into an adjoining apartment, whither Sigismund immediately went to receive her. She was beautiful, although in years, and the peculiar mourning garb which she wore shewed that she had but very lately lost her husband. She fell on her knees before the lofty Sigismund, and the soft tones of her voice struck on his heart. . . . It was Ulrica! that Ulrica Gardemin, whom nineteen years before, when she was in the full bloom of her youth, Sigismund had endeavoured to seduce. For nineteen long years Sigismund had never thought of Ulrica; a constant succession of mistresses had driven her completely from his recollection. Ulrica had forgotten too the man who
had

had attempted to seduce her innocence ; but she had not forgotten that Sigismund was her liege lord, and as her chief paramount she respected his power. She sued for justice at the feet of Sigismund. On the death of her husband, her two sons, who were both under age, were eternally quarrelling for the right which each asserted over the little patrimony of their father. They were hot-headed, spirited youths, and a word from their lord would decide their respective shares, and his timely admonition might reclaim them from their evil ways.— Thus sued Ulrica.

“It shall be done,” exclaimed Sigismund. He commanded the widow to remain, while he ordered her sons to be brought before him in another apartment in front of the castle. They were two fine and lovely striplings, but full of the waywardness and elasticity

elasticity of mind of young men of spirit.

After a considerable delay, Ulrica was sent for by Sigismund. "Where are my children?" she exclaimed when she entered his apartment, which was dark and silent. Sigismund's mind wandered on other subjects—he talked of his former passion for Ulrica—of his bitter disappointment—of her charms, and of her cruelty—of his love, and her disdain. The eyes of Sigismund flashed fire on her while he spoke—the convulsion of deadly emotion was working across his visage—his pale lips quivered as he spoke, and the livid tinges of his wild and hectic countenance smote the heart of Ulrica with horror.

Ulrica's mind was suddenly filled with dark forebodings. "Where," she exclaimed, with a voice wound up to the highest pitch of exertion, "in
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“pity, Count Mörner, ah! tell me,
“where are my children?”

Sigismund approached the casement, and gave a private signal; “approach, “Ulrica,” said he, “and you *shall* “see your children.”

Ulrica hastened to the window. . . all she beheld was a black drapery drawn across the two pines in front of the castle. “My children!” repeated Ulrica, in a voice suffocated with anguish.

“Let her behold them!” vociferated Sigismund.

The black cloth was instantly dropped, and the frantic and horror-struck mother beheld, illuminated by pine torches, the naked and convulsed bodies of her children hanging on a branch of each tree, and writhing in the last agonies of strangulation!—Unhappy mother! her agony was the shriek of death!—The barbarian left her

her to her suffering, and joined his friends in the banqueting hall ; but so legibly were the dark characters of his cruelty written on his brow, that the affectation of mirth and revelry fled at his approach. The death-like silence which prevailed was soon broken by the arrival of Ulrica, whom the attendants could not prevent from rushing into the banqueting hall.

Arvedina immediately recognized her, and rose from her seat in terror. Ulrica's dress was stained with the blood of her children, whom she had been embracing in death—her eyes rolled wildly, and her hair hung dishevelled. With a strength almost superhuman, and with the collected energy of her scattered faculties, which she had wound up to this her fixed purpose, she rushed to the centre of the hall, and with an eloquence borrowed from heaven, she related the heart-

rending tale of Sigismund's cruelty. The attendants were awe-struck, and durst not approach to obey the orders of their master, and drag her from his presence.

Ulrica now solemnly knelt on the floor, and looking up to Heaven with clasped hands, she added, "God, who
 " revenges the cause of the childless,
 " of the widow, now inspires me, and
 " through my weak organ, tells the
 " judgments to come. Hear you, Si-
 " gismund!—Hearken ye of the house
 " of Mörner!—Listen to the unalter-
 " able decrees of destiny. THE CURSE
 " of the all-powerful, of the all-migh-
 " ty one is now gone forth against
 " your house! for you have filled up
 " the measure of your iniquity! It
 " is the fiat of the God of unerring
 " justice and truth, that your now
 " flourishing house shall be CURSED
 " for three generations! He who in
 " time

“ time of old hath spoken and com-
“ manded that the sins of the fathers
“ shall be visited on the heads of their
“ children, now punishes you for your
“ misdeeds!—and who shall question
“ the inscrutable ways of the all just
“ and all powerful God?!!”

Exhausted by this terrible denunciation, Ulrica fell extended on the floor. The guests had risen, and Sigismund had fled in dismay; but on lifting up Ulrica, she spoke not—the spark of life was extinguished for ever! Ulrica was no more!—her accusing spirit had flown to the recording Angel, and stood before the throne of God, waiting for judgment! . . .

Arvedina was carried from the hall in convulsions, and in a few days rendered her soul into the hands of her Creator.

Sigismund, . . . who can tell what were the feelings of Sigismund? for

the few remaining years of his life, his mind seemed paralyzed. This castle soon became hateful to his despairing soul!—he joined the armed bands of the nobility, who in those days waged desperate war against the bishops who were in the pay of Denmark. His body was shattered to pieces by a cannon ball which was discharged from an episcopal palace, at the moment when he had put himself at the head of the besieging troops, and had issued the orders to take it by storm.

From this time the prediction has been accomplished—and the decrees of the mighty one are fulfilling! The history of the house of Mörner, after the death of Sigismund, exhibits but the dark course of its misfortunes. Harold, in his early years, had the advantage of his mother's care and piety, in the direction of his studies; but the bad example of his father had a fatal influence

influence on his youth. He was a weak and sickly child, and when he grew towards manhood, his constitution still retained its delicacy. Unhappily, the dreadful and untimely end of his parents happened at that time, when the habits of the mind are seldom formed; and a mind like his, destitute of energy, was completely overthrown by the appalling prospects, which a futurity so dark presented to his view. He travelled for a number of years in the southern parts of Europe. From the constant succession of calamities he endured, he became strongly tinctured with the principles of fatalism; and the doctrine of predestination seems to have been imbibed by his descendants. He married in Poland a lady of a noble family, and returned shortly after, to spend the remainder of his days in this castle. He was by nature of an harmless disposition,

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position, and even strongly inclined to piety and good works; but the melancholy fate of his parents was ever present to his view, and the curse of Ulrica still sounded in his ears. As an atonement to heaven, he ordered the remains of Ulrica's sons to be taken from their simple grave, and he interred them magnificently in the chapel of St. Bridget's Abbey. He erected a noble monument to the memory of the unfortunate Arvedina, and by many pious offices attempted to disarm the wrath of the Almighty. But alas! in vain; his mind began to exhibit marks of decay, in consequence of his sorrow at the death of his consort. His youngest son, the present Count was then in the prime of life; and in the absence of his elder brother, (who it was afterwards reported died abroad), he assumed the management of the estates. The days of the
old

old Count were soon closed by the progress of his disease, and by the shock he received in the loss of his eldest son, the brave Waldemar.

Magnus, the present Count, has not been exempt from the misfortunes of his fathers; but it becomes not me to dwell on the melancholy fate of my illustrious master. His marriage with a descendant of a noble French family has not been blessed with happiness. She bore to the Count two children, a son and a daughter. Lovely babes! in these arms I have often pressed them, and my heart would throb as I fondled them. At the birth of his children, when the father's heart should sing with joy, the Count's melancholy increased, and he never could endure the sight of them. When the eldest was six months old, it was reported that it died of convulsions: I say reported, for strange rumours were

circulated on this subject through the castle. It happened in the fatal month of October, I shall never forget it. It was just such a night as this.—I was ascending the spiral staircase of the turret, a part of the roof had given way, and the snow had fallen heavily; and there it lay in the form of an infant's shroud, crossing my way on the staircase. My limbs trembled so, I could scarcely crawl to my bed, and my fears kept me awake all night long. Alas! the morning confirmed my apprehensions—the infant had been carried off that night by repeated fits. The Countess took it much to heart at first; but, strange to tell, the Count recovered his spirits from the moment the infant died. Well! not long after this, my lady lay-in of a daughter, and the Count became more gloomy than ever. This was about eighteen years ago; I remember

his narrative of the sufferings of the Mörner family. But there was, at times, an appearance of mystery in the manner and expressions of Olaus, which carried this conviction to the mind of Adolphus, that he had not related to him *all* that concerned that unfortunate family. He felt that he had no claim on the confidence of Olaus for any part of his communication, and from the repulse which Olaus had given to his curiosity, he relinquished the attempt to gain information on the subject of these mysteries, as quite hopeless. He saw now that he should be obliged to act with the utmost caution; he resolved that the confidence which he placed in the old Warder should be tempered with prudence, and he determined to be on his guard against any attempt which might be made to surprise him.

Olaus led Adolphus into his own
bed-

bedchamber, which was a small square room, wainscoted with oak, which age and dirt had nearly blackened. "In former times," said Olaus, "a small door of communication was opened from this room into the adjoining chambers in the body of the castle, probably in order to save the attendants the trouble of going round by the courts in bad weather, when they were required to attend in the state apartments." Olaus touched one of the pannels of the wainscot, which immediately slid back, and left an aperture sufficiently large to admit one person. Beyond the aperture all was dark and still.

The old Warder stopped to trim his lamp. while they waited, Adolph distinctly heard the sound of retreating footsteps in the chamber they were about to enter. "Heard you that noise, Olaus?" Olaus trembled,
and

and appeared evidently agitated. " I
" heard nothing," he replied, " but
" age has made me rather deaf—fear
" not, 'tis but the echo of our voices,
" or the current of still air within,
" which the opening of this door has
" set in motion. You may see it is
" so by the wasting of our lamp."
The Warder now advanced boldly into
the apartment, followed by Adolphus,
who anxiously explored the room, but
could find no intruder. This was a
large room, and wainscoted like the
Warder's chamber; but the remains
of gilt ornaments on the walls, and the
rich furniture, which was old and mas-
sive, and adorned with curious speci-
mens of the carving of former times,
shewed that this apartment had been
inhabited by persons of distinction. At
one end of the room, stood the bed
which Olaus had alluded to. A ca-
nopy, which had been once richly gilt,
juttet

jutted from the wall above it, and two thick curtains of rich damask descended from it, and surrounded the couch. The stove, which stood at the side of the room, seemed, from its form and elegance, to be a modern structure.

It was a beautiful column of white marble, which stood insulated from the wall, and shot up from the floor to the roof. The windows were completely nailed up on the outside, so that no ray of light could penetrate them.

“ These magnificent walls have often echoed with the revelry of many a brave and handsome youth, the blossom of his time, who laughed at sorrow, and thought his raven locks would never change their hue ! Where are they ? Time and eternity covers them ! ” exclaimed Adolphus.

“ It is truly said,” observed Olaus, “ but in truth ’tis sad.”

“ You

“Yon antique mirror,” continued Adolphus, “has reflected the image
“of many a vain smiling fair one.
“The heart that throbbed with pleasure, the sparkling eye, the complexion of roses, the heaving bosom,
“and the ivory arms, where are they?
“gone to their small and narrow cell.”

“You are melancholy, Sir Knight.”

“I have reason to be so,” replied Adolphus; “this scene recalls to my
“mind the visions of past times,—the
“peaceful days of my youth,—the
“green vallies of Lorraine, and the
“castle of my fathers!”

“So young and so unfortunate!” sighed Olaus. “Seat yourself,” he continued, “in this chair of state,
“while I fetch some billets to make a
“fire in the stove. I shall need the
“lamp for a few moments.”

Olaus disappeared with the light, and Adolphus, left in utter darkness,
walked

walked up and down the extent of the apartment buried in reflexion. He was awakened from his trance by the measured sound of a gently falling foot. Adolphus followed the sound with extended arms, but nothing of palpable existence met his touch. He stood in the center of the room, when, to his utter amazement, an aspiration, like the gentle stirring of the evening breeze, stole upon his ear, and the softly whispered sound of "ADOLPHUS" electrified him.

"Incomprehensible!" exclaimed Adolphus, while he smote the air with his arms, endeavouring to catch the mysterious intruder. Instantly Olaus entered with the light, and Adolphus renewed his search without meeting with any elucidation of the mystery. He felt too proud to communicate the suspicions of fear and treachery which crowded on his mind, to the old warder;

warder ; but Olaus, who perceived the anxious search which Adolphus was making through the apartment, although he knew not the object of it, now conjured him in the most impressive terms, not to enter the suite of apartments which lay beyond the room which he had allotted to him. "Why," said Adolphus, sarcastically, (while he threw an inquiring glance on Olaus,) "are you afraid I shall disturb the rest of my next-door neighbours?"

"Alas! no," replied Olaus, "unless we disturb the dead; the adjoining apartments were those used by the Lady Arvedina. They have always been held sacred by the inhabitants of this castle, who revered her virtues, which, pure and celestial as they were, could not deprecate Heaven's wrath, or lessen the horrors of that curse which still hangs over the house

"house of Mörner. It is the report
 "of old times, and handed down from
 "generation to generation, that her
 "sainted spirit, in certain times and
 "seasons, descending from the bosom
 "of bliss, is permitted to wander in
 "those haunts she loved, for the pro-
 "tection of such of her descendants
 "as merit the favour of Heaven.—
 "Then is the sword of justice sus-
 "pended, and the bolt from heaven
 "passes these guilty towers. Na-
 "ture herself for a time lifts her
 "languid head, and then is this place
 "blessed, and those the favoured few
 "of heaven, are blessed beneath it.
 "Let us respect, therefore, the dwell-
 "ing of those who wander from the
 "tomb!"

The pine-logs which Olaus had set
 on fire now blazed cheerfully. He
 laid the lamp on the hearth, and wish-
 ing Adolphus a good night's repose,
 he

he disappeared through the door of communication, which instantly closed after him. The injunctions of Olaus did not counteract those motives which swayed the mind of Adolphus, and influenced his resolves. He warred not with the dead; he injured not the living; what then had he to fear? It is true the extraordinary events of his life almost impressed him with a belief of the possibility that man might awfully commune with incorporeal essence. The desolate and dreary chambers which surrounded him were inimical to the living, and appeared to be a fit haunt for the unquiet spirits of the departed. The melancholy recital of unheard-of woe; the superstitious and mysterious injunctions of Olaus; the awful hour itself! all conspired to fill his mind with dark forbodings and supernatural alarm. Adolphus, however, threw from his mind the chilling influence

fluence of superstitious fear. He took the lamp from the hearth, raised it above his head, and moved it round with an exploring eye; but his own revolving shadow was all that he discerned. A curtain hung against the wall opposite to the hearth; it was of figured green silk; and on removing it, Adolphus beheld the door of communication, which led to the apartments of Avedina. This door was covered with a large gilt cross, surrounded with scripture phrases, written in the Latin language; in the corners were cherubims' heads, and in the centre of the cross, the latter part of the second commandment was written in large illuminated letters. This is certainly, thought Adolphus, the pious work of the superstitious Count Harold, who seems to have endeavoured to expiate the crimes of his ancestor, by the mummerly of priestcraft, rather than

than by good deeds and a life of virtue ! Adolphus endeavoured in vain to force open this door : it was held fast by a spring lock, which he no sooner touched than the bolts gave way. The door bore heavy against his pressure, like the effort of some one on the other side, who resisted his entrance. He now gave his whole strength to the effort, and the door yielded slowly before him ; but on entering the apartment it closed to with great violence ; and to his infinite mortification, he discovered that there was no means of opening it but from the room he had quitted. Adolphus felt infinitely disconcerted by this accident, as it was impossible for him to make Olaus hear him through the massy walls which separated them ; and while he gazed round the room in which he stood, his feeble lamp scarce flung its beams on the undefined extremities

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tremities of its dark outline. It seemed to him impossible to effect his escape from this chilling and dreary abode ; and the crackling of the pine-logs in the adjoining chamber, while his teeth were chattering with the cold, made him now feel the effects of his own rashness, and he deeply lamented that he had not followed the advice of Olaus. On examining this room, it struck him, that it was the state bed chamber belonging to this suite of apartments. The walls were decorated with rich gilding, and ornaments of a barbarous taste. There was a bed which was decked with the cumbrous magnificence of former ages : but the colour of its furniture had faded, and its richly brocaded covering had become the food of moths. Some portraits, darkened by age, hung against the walls. They were executed in the hard and inlaid manner which distinguished

guished the works of the very early masters, and their black and meagre visages seemed to scowl with terrific frown on Adolphus, as rapidly examining, he passed them with the lamp. At the end of the room which was opposite to the bed, two staircases, whose steps were of white marble, ascended to a little gallery, at no very great elevation from the floor. Two lofty windows rose above the gallery : they were ornamented with the armorial bearings of the Mörner family, executed in stained glass, and appeared in tolerable preservation. A small oratory was situated between the casements, the interior of which was concealed by a curtain of black cloth. On approaching the casements, Adolphus found that they commanded an extensive prospect : the tremulous and uncertain glimmering of light at the farthest verge of the horizon, told

him that the dawning of day was not far distant. Amid the roaring of the wind, he could hear with distinctness the distant thunder of the cataracts, and at intervals the melancholy vibrations of the castle bell, which tolled as the swelling gust swept by it, and rung in the ear like the knell of death ! With faltering steps Adolphus paced the gallery, and having trimmed his lamp, which now but faintly glimmered, he descended the staircase. He examined the chamber once more on every side, and after the most anxious search, he could discover no way of escaping from this abode of horror ! With a sorrowful gait, and a countenance pale and wan, he approached the cold hearth, and deposited his lamp upon it, which had now sunk in the socket. The dark clouds which had obscured the disk of the moon were now scattered, and through their

their luminous fringes the rays broke, and painted the rich and mellow tints of the stained glass, and her own lucid and silver light, on the dark flooring of the remote end of the chamber. Towards the bed Adolphus now approached, as the only place of safety, and after recommending himself to the protection of heaven, he muffled himself in his fur cloak and threw himself upon the couch. Thoughts of the darkest hue hung heavy on his heart, and shook repose from his eyelids. He shrunk within himself, when the storm rolled its thunders over him, and he almost believed it to be the denunciation of heaven. Spectres, in his troubled imagination, appeared to rise before him, sad sounds seemed to mingle in the war of elements, and he started when the shrieking wild owl flapped his wing against a casement of the chamber.

To sleep in such a situation was impossible for Adolphus: he lay with unclosed eyes, and with a look fixed on vacancy, he peopled the murky corners of the chamber with a thousand horrors. He persuaded himself, however, that it was but the wild shapings of his own creative fancy which thus disturbed him, and he was making an effort to disengage his mind from the influence of such ghastly horrors, which like an incubus bestrided him, and laid the heaviness of despair upon his heart, when his attention was once more fixed on an object which seemed to advance from one of the corners of the chamber. The light was too weak at that moment to allow him to discern the exact figure of the unknown. He was in doubt, whether it was a being of this world, or a messenger of the world to come. Its dark and sombre covering shewed nothing

thing of a human lineament or shape. Its gait was solemn, and its motion dignified, as it advanced across the chamber, and when it strided athwart the disk of the moon, and stood on the bright ground, eclipsing her light, the extent of its form, with its length of shadow, appeared to bear the port of something more than human. It continued its course across the chamber, and while Adolphus followed it with eager eye, it recalled to his recollection the supernatural bearing of that extraordinary figure which had twice presented itself, uncalled, before him, and had revealed the secrets of futurity. While he yet anxiously watched it, it approached the wall, and suddenly vanished! He had scarcely acquired his self-possession, and was about to spring from the bed, in order to pursue this phantom and discover its mode of escape, when his attention

was arrested by a noise he heard in the little gallery of the oratory—a door opened, and the twinkling of a light appeared, carried by a form which advanced along the gallery and entered the oratory. He heard a piercing shriek, and in a few moments the figure came from the oratory, descended the marble staircase, and approached that part of the chamber in which Adolphus lay. He could now plainly distinguish that it was a female of a very dignified appearance, who carried in her hand a watch-lamp. She was attired in deep mourning, and a long black veil descended from her head and swept the ground. Her cheeks were pale and shrivelled—there was no ruby tint upon her lip—her eyes were large and glassy, and the lustre which had once beamed from their orbits had flown for ever! Her gait was majestic and slow, and ever
and

and anon, as she walked, she muttered the broken and indistinct sounds of one who talks to herself. As she approached the bed, these sounds met his ear: “Retribution! Retribution!—
 “Hark! the stars are falling!—the
 “earth is blazing, and the firmament
 “is shrivelled and rolled up before
 “the consuming fire!—This is fire
 “beneath my foot; ah! no, it is
 “blood!—It is the day of judgment!
 “Behold! the heavens are opening,
 “and the trumpets of the everlasting
 “are sounding before the lamb!—
 “Awake! awake!—Mörner!—Adolphus!—Zarembeg! . . . They sleep!
 “Hear ye not the mighty voice?—
 “Sleep no more!—Is there rest? is
 “there sleep for the accursed of
 “God?”

During these extraordinary exclamations, Adolphus kept his eye fixed on the advancing figure. On hearing his

own name mentioned, the horrible thoughts which thrilled through him, paralyzed his frame, and rendered him incapable of addressing himself unto this mysterious being. On its approach to the bed, Adolphus closed his eyes and lay motionless, after recommending himself to the protection of Heaven. The figure drew back the curtains, and held up the lamp.

“ Ah! he yet sleeps,” exclaimed she, “ can the guilty lie so still?—
“ Where is thy dagger? Has it drank
“ its fill of blood?—Peace! there is no
“ sleep for me.... my brain burns!
“ Look not thus wild upon me—it is
“ his ghost! They have murdered
“ him, — the outcast, the wretched
“ one!—Blood for blood!—Mörner
“ awake, they are coming. I behold
“ the flaming sword of God—they
“ pursue us to the verge of the earth!
“ Mercy! mercy!”

The

The figure quitted the bed and retreated towards the gallery, muttering the same wild exclamations. The mind of Adolphus was filled with infinite surprise and horror. "It is," he exclaimed, "it is the spirit of Arvedina!" He started from the bed and pursued the figure as it rapidly receded. "Stay, sainted spirit! by those powers of Heaven which you obey, I conjure thee—Why are the names of Adolphus and Mörner coupled in that dreadful denunciation? Speak — hear me — it is Adolphus himself who calls thee!"

The figure turned as it gained the landing place, whither Adolphus resolutely pursued it. "Holy cross of Christ!" exclaimed she, "it is the ghost of Mörner!" Fleet as the wind she passed the gallery. The door flew open at her touch, and instantly closed when she entered. Adolphus

tried in vain to open the door, which resisted all his efforts—the faint light which the moon shed could not enable him to discover either lock or spring. He retreated a few paces, and then with a collected effort, he threw his whole weight against it. The door was forced from its hinges, and fell with a crash, which echoed along the winding corridors like distant thunder. The way before him was narrow and dark—he groped along the walls for a considerable time, without finding any aperture. He continued wandering along the corridors so long, sometimes ascending and descending flights of stairs, that he imagined he must have reached the farthest extremity of the castle. He passed several apartments, but their doors were too firmly closed to yield to his pressure. A faint glimmering of light now appeared at the extremity of a flight of stairs ;

stairs; and on descending them, he found himself in what appeared to be the great hall of the castle. The moon shone dimly through the broken casements, and he rapidly glided over its smooth and shining mosaic pavement. On turning the corner of the grand staircase, the figure of a man darted from behind one of the massive pillars which supported its fretted roof. Adolphus without taking counsel of prudence, instantly pursued him, although destitute of all means of self-defence. The man descended a flight of stairs, and after turning through many dark and winding passages, disappeared in a vaulted passage, which appeared to be formed in the very foundations of the castle. Thither Adolphus cautiously advanced, although the damp and unwholesome exhalations threatened to impede his further progress. He now observed the twinkling of a light
in

in a cranny of the wall. On approaching the spot, he found it proceeded from the chinks in a large iron door. The whispers of mingled voices reached his ear through them, and on looking through one of the fissures, he beheld the interior of a spacious vault. In the centre of it stood a table, lit by one solitary lamp; but the light was so feeble that it did not define the extremities of this immense dungeon. Several dark forms, which appeared to the astonished Adolphus to be of gigantic stature, now and then stalked forward and partly emerged from the gloom; but the faint light did not render their faces visible, nor could Adolphus discover aught from which he might divine the purpose of this strange assembly. The deep silence of the place was broken by a voice which cried from the roof of the vault, "Hearken! I hear the tread of
" hostile

“ hostile feet.” Suddenly the assembly rose in anger, and with furious gestures they approached the door. Adolphus instantly quitted his position, and with his utmost speed retreated through the vaulted passage. In his haste, he mistook the turning leading to the hall, and after ascending a flight of many steps, he found himself in quite a different part of the castle. The hum of distant voices gathering behind him, told him that he was still pursued. Desperation now urged him on, and the faint rays of the morning guided him. He looked round him in vain, for some time-worn sword, that might have dropped from the grasp of gloves of steel; which adorned the rusty and mouldering trophies ranged on high, the memorials of ancient days; but they were at a height infinitely above his reach. He tried to wrench from its place

place, a massy iron bar which was one of the securities of a narrow casement, in order to sell his life as dearly as possible, in case his pursuers came up with him, but it resisted the utmost efforts of his strength. Still continuing to advance, and still pursued, he passed through many chambers, and by passages so intricate, as to give him little hope, (in case he eluded the pursuit of his enemies), of escaping from the protracted agonies of famine, and of emerging from this dreary castle, which seemed about to become his prison and his tomb ! The glittering of a point on the floor attracted his eye : he snatched it up, and discovered that it was a dagger, whose blade was encrusted with blood ! He placed it eagerly in his bosom, and felt rejoiced at this acquisition, from the reflection that the blood of his pursuers would mingle with his own.

A small

A small flight of marble steps conducted him into a long and lofty apartment; the walls were covered with portraits of kings and queens of Sweden, and the grim ancestors of the house of Mörner, clad in their doublets or armed in complete steel, frowned in terrible succession. Adolphus perceived to his utter dismay, that all further flight was barred, all escape was impossible; for the opposite door of this gallery was too firmly closed to yield to his attempt, and, although he might ultimately prevail in forcing it, yet the time this would occupy would end in his destruction. Nay, even a few minutes longer, and he was utterly lost. Perplexed and dismayed, he paused for a moment. He stood opposite the whole length portrait of Sigismund, which from the description given by Olaus, he recognized immediately. The faint and
roseate

roseate beams of early morning played on the canvas. The cheek of Sigismund seemed flushed, and the colour of life mantled on his parted and almost breathing lip: the rising sun glowed on his countenance alone; the rest of the figure was in dark shadow. The expression of the features suddenly changed, and the portrait assumed a sterner look; on the moment Adolphus turned his head, for his ear caught the sound of distant feet—his heart throbbed—his courage mounted—he clenched the dagger, and exclaimed wildly, “the decisive moment is come!” A sudden exclamation from a voice beside him startled him; there was not a human being in the room! He looked for the portrait of Sigismund—it was gone; and in its frame stood a young female in an attitude of surprise, opposite the bewildered and astonished Adolphus; who

who, while he gazed on that lovely form, took it for a creation of the element. "Heavenly powers," exclaimed he, "Surely I am deceived! it is not, it cannot be!" A sudden shriek from the aperture, the well known sound of her voice, and the increasing light which now beamed on her, convinced him that this was no illusion, but his beloved Edda, who stood before him! There was no time for explanation—he briefly stated his danger. Edda threw down in haste a small ladder which was attached to the back of the picture. Adolphus instantly ascended; the ladder was drawn up, and the portrait of Sigismund descended to its place.

In the same moment the gallery was filled with an armed band who vented their curses loudly at their disappointment. Adolphus was led by his fair conductor along a dark

dark and ~~very~~ narrow passage which was formed by the very walls of the castle. While he pressed with tenderness the hand he held in his, he kissed it with silent homage, and proceeded to repeat his vows of attachment, and offered his thanks for the assistance she had afforded him in his miraculous escape. "Hush!" replied Edda interrupting him, "we are perhaps overheard, and the condition upon which I shall continue to assist you in escaping from your pursuers is, that you remain silent, at least until we are assured of our safety." She now pointed to a small trap-door in the passage, which Adolphus raised up; and after they had descended several flights of stone stairs, she applied a key which hung at her girdle to a small door, which instantly opened into an apartment, small but neatly furnished.

Adolphus

Adolphus now pressed Edda to relate to him by what fatality she had become an inmate of the castle of Riddarholmen?

“It is impossible,” exclaimed Edda fearfully, “to explain at present those
“extraordinary events which have led
“to our occupation of this castle, and
“which force me to hold towards you
“an ungracious and mysterious silence;—in brief, —be not alarmed
“on my account, Montbazon protects
“me here, but I fear that he has not the
“power to protect you. It is impossible
“for you to remain another moment
“here in safety;—your pursuers must
“now be aware that you escaped by
“~~some~~ ^{the} secret passage from the gallery, and if the secret of Sigismund’s portrait is known to any of
“them, we are even now too late.
“Fly, Adolphus, I conjure you. Nay
“then (seeing the hesitation of Adolphus,) phus,)

“phus,) if you value my peace and
“your own life, follow me.”

Adolphus was obliged to comply, however reluctantly, with the injunctions of Edda. “Let us be quick,” cried Edda; “’ere yet the sun has
“quite risen you will have time to
“quit this part of the castle, and
“through passages where we may fear
“no interruption from your pursuers,
“you can pass beyond the courts inclosed by the ramparts.”

Edda took up a lamp, and opened the door of her apartment, while Adolphus followed her with hurried steps. After traversing many passages they descended a circular staircase, at the bottom of which Edda unbolted a heavy iron door. Adolphus took her hand, —once more kissed it, while a tear fell on it. He again pressed her to allow him to remain until he had seen Montbazou; he mentioned the protection
which

which Olaus had afforded him the night before, and added that with his assistance he might probably be capable of defending himself.

“It is in vain,” replied Edda, “to propose a plan, which, if you value your safety and your life, can only end in ruin. But, ere we part, recollect, never disclose the chance which has conducted you to me. Farewell! and may you taste of happiness. Who can tell whether we shall meet again? but you are our hopes and fears. Who can fly from the hand of fate?”

“Who can fly from the hand of fate?” sighed Adolphus to himself, as he passed through the little postern gate, and found himself chilled by the breath of morning, and once more standing in the outside court of the castle. At a little distance from him he beheld Olaus, crossing the court
towards

towards his turret. He started at the approach of Adolphus, as if he beheld a ghost. His looks reproached Adolphus; but they were looks of pity rather than of anger, and he exclaimed in accents of sorrow, "rash young man! see the effects of your imprudence: thou hast despised the counsels of an aged man, and hast brought his grey hairs to shame for harboring thee."

Adolphus interrupted him, and was about to relate his fears on the preceding evening. "Hush!" continued Olaus, in anger, "be silent, if you can defend yourself only by calumniating those whose lives are free from reproach. It was not without a powerful motive that I cautioned you not to attempt exploring the apartments which lie beyond the chamber which I placed you in. You disregarded my caution."

“ tion : a-juvenile curiosity, perhaps a
“ waywardness of disposition, which
“ delights in opposing those who offer
“ to prescribe rules to you, induced
“ you to ramble over these interdicted
“ apartments. You have brought dis-
“ grace perhaps on me, and ran the
“ risk of losing ... even your life.”

The protestations of Adolphus had, in some degree, lessened the anger which the old warder felt towards him, but still grief clouded his brow. While they walked hastily towards the portal, Adolphus anxiously demanded to be informed of the residence of Count Mörner, as he expressed an intention of immediately seeking him, in order to comply with the last injunction of his father

After Olaus had informed him of the place he now resided in, he gave a caution to Adolphus to beware how he approached Riddarholmen again,

and 'ere he closed the portal, he dismissed him in these words: " the
" poor, the sick, and the maimed,
" never knock at this gate; for here
" charity does not dwell ... and my
" means are scanty—and if perchance
" at night-fall a peasant crosses the
" wild-wood that encircles these tow-
" ers, he mutters to himself a silent
" prayer, and invokes the all-powerful
" name which guards the just; for
" here all things of darkness are sup-
" posed to dwell—the mysteries of
" guilt that shuns the light; all shapes
" of horror, and unholy sights. An
" unknown and indefinable sensation
" shot thro' me the first moment I
" beheld you .. compassion and this
" unknown sympathy induced me to
" believe that in giving you the shel-
" ter of one night, the wrath of hea-
" ven might allow you to repose here
" in peace. From what you no doubt
" have

“ have observed, you must have felt
“ that you are not exempt from the
“ general destiny which here pre-
“ vails.”

“ I have felt, and deeply felt this
“ truth,” sighed Adolphus inwardly.

“ Farewell !” cried Olaus, as he
closed the portal ; “ farewell ! an old
“ man’s blessing goes with you ; but
“ remember, avoid the towers of Rid-
“ darholmen ! !” •

• “ Wretched outcast that I am ! what
“ roof will shelter me ? In a strange
“ land too ! bereft of all ; yea, even of
“ hope !” Such were the exclama-
tions of Adolphus as he passed through
the woods of Riddarholmen, and sought
the road which conducted him to the
residence of Count Möner.

CHAP. VII.

Thou shalt live in thy pain,

With a fire in thy heart,

And a fire in thy brain ;

And sleep shall obey me,

And visit thee never,

And the curse shall be on thee

For ever and ever !

SOUTHEY.

DRIVEN from the mansion of his forefathers, by the awful fear that the vials of Heaven's wrath should be poured over his head, and too sensible that his conscience would not allow him to oppose an invulnerable shield against the evils of this world, (which are sometimes necessary chastisements, and passing soon away) ; and placing no confidence, no hope, in the world to come, Count Magnus Mörner had collected

collected the remains of his once splendid fief, and purchased a magnificent château, surrounded by a small park, in the immediate vicinity of the capital. This place now constituted his sole earthly possession ; for the principal part of his estates at Riddarholmen lay untenanted and untilled—exposed to the awful visitation of the elements, and deserted by most of the superstitious vassals, who never could be induced to approach the place without feeling the utmost degree of fear and horror.

It was impossible to combat the bigotry of those ages by any of those arms, which a more enlightened period of society supplies us with ; philosophy—divine and genuine philosophy, had not as yet reared its head, and those noxious visions, which pressed the human mind in the night of barbarism, had not as yet been shewn

in all their deformity by its rising glory, nor dispelled by its bright and eternal beam. It was impossible to find a purchaser for that which such extraordinary circumstances had rendered valueless; and the castle of Riddarholmen, with its demesnes, fell into the utter ruin and decay which ~~we~~ have attempted to describe in the preceding chapters. The sale of part of this fief which lay most remote from Riddarholmen, enabled the Count to fly from its hated walls for ever, and to purchase the small but ancient barony of Cronberg.

This delightful residence was situated on the lake Møler. It was embosomed in woods, which descended to the borders of the lake, and through their vistas, the frequent sail, gleaming in gold, might be discerned gliding along the silent and azure wave. The heavens had as yet shone serene
on

on Cronberg ; its smiling fields yielded a plenteous increase, and the labour of the husbandman had been rewarded by the bounty of nature ;—but beneath the gilded roofs of the residence, on beds of down, on couches of velvet, surrounded by all that prodigality can desire or luxury invent, in the company of the voluptuous, the dissipated, and the gay—its ill-starred master felt neither pleasure nor repose—he glided like a guilty thing expecting a fearful summons. To him the breathing bust, the speaking picture, conveyed no delight. Along the storied walls his eyes rolled wildly, or fixed in vacancy, deprived of their eloquent fire, glassy and seared, they appeared to question some horrible vision, which crossed his path, and rooted his limbs in fear and horror to the spot. At times his attendants have answered to his call, and when his

voice had drawn them round his person, he took no notice of their approach, but appeared to hold strange converse with the air—his ear drank in unearthly sounds, his hands would extend themselves, and seemed to grapple with space. At length his frame, riven with extraordinary emotion, would appear to be dissolved from this frightful and unhallowed meeting. Exhausted and senseless, they would bear him to his bed, and the utmost care and attention was requisite to recover him from these trances. In this disease, the powers of medicine had been found of no avail—the physician of the mind was requisite, and it was not a great while since the Count had procured a person, to whom he thought he could confide his wounded conscience.

The ancestors of Count Magnus Mörner had been educated in the Lutheran

theran faith, which became the religion of the country in the time of Gustavus Vasa. Unfortunately, John III. at this time King of Sweden, endeavoured to introduce the Roman Catholic religion, and the profession of this faith was even made a passport to his favour. Count Mörner did not hesitate in adopting this mode of recommending himself to the good graces of his sovereign, and from his efforts in what was called the good cause, he made rapid strides in his favour.

In the shock occasioned by religious conflicts, it is usual to see the combatants, on either side, act as if they possessed no religion at all; and in the struggles of these times, as history has handed them down to us, we see that the name of God and his holy religion was, in many cases, only made the pretext for committing the basest actions

and the most horrible outrages on humanity.

The Franciscan monks in France, with that activity which distinguished their order, had dispatched Rezzonico, along with many other missionaries, to the court of John, in order to feed the holy flame, extend the acquirements of their order, and increase the number of the converted. The crafty subtlety of this monk enabled him soon to discern the means of firmly attaching the Count Magnus Mörner to their cause. His penetrating eye soon discovered, that on the Count's conscience there lay the weight of some dreadful crime, which unexpiated, unatoned, and unrepented, consigned him to despair in this world, and to torture in the next. The cunning Italian, with the most refined hypocrisy, rung in the Count's ear all the varieties

ties of hell's torments,—eternal, unmitigated punishment — torture less horrible, and of a limited duration—purgatory—absolution of sin—Christ's redemption — and Heaven's forgiveness. The Count, attracted by the hope which these doctrines held out to him, as well as influenced by the desire of recommending himself to the King, became a Catholic, if not from conviction, at least from necessity, and the monk was rewarded by his new convert with a gift of little worth in his hands, but of inestimable value to Rezzonico :—this was the ancient abbey of St. Bridget, which stood near the castle of Riddarholmen. In the possession of Rezzonico, it served as a rallying point for those of his order in the north of Europe, and he looked forward to its eventually proving an establishment worthy of his most aspiring and ambitious views of advancement.

ment. The mind of his penitent had not been cured by absolution, and Rezzonico felt convinced that there existed in the mind of the Count, a secret which he had not yet confided to his ear. He had confessed enough to leave no doubt of his guilt on the mind of his confessor ; but Rezzonico had a powerful reason which impelled him to the acquisition of every damning proof of this untold crime : and he sought to acquire those master-spells of the Count's mind, in order that he might move him according to his will, which would infallibly be the case the moment he fell completely into his power.

Whether Count Mörner penetrated the designs of Rezzonico, or had as yet but little faith in the new doctrines which he had espoused, it is certain that the exquisite skill with which the monk played with his victim, was for the

the

the present foiled, and remained unrepaired by success. The confessor, however, still continued an inmate of Crönberg, and trusted to chance and perseverance for the obtaining of that secret which had hitherto eluded his grasp.

The Countess Eleonora of Mörner was held in too little estimation at Cronberg to interfere with the designs of the confessor. An unfortunate attachment for an illustrious foreigner, after her marriage with the Count had taken place, his consequent cruelty and abandonment of his wife, the misfortunes of the family, and the deprivation of her children, had contributed to destroy her constitution, and had laid in ruin the powers of her mind. The periodical fits of insanity to which she was subject, rendered it necessary to remove her to the neighbourhood of Riddarholmen, where the
skilful

skilful Laurentius, who had acquired considerable repute in the cure of these diseases, generally resided.

The Count had attempted early in life, by a most extraordinary sacrifice, to elude that vengeance which the crimes of his ancestors had drawn down on his head and on his immediate descendants. This was the sacrifice of his eldest son, and afterwards of his daughter. At that moment when the fond looks of a doating father are replied to by the cherub smiles of a lovely innocent, did he struggle with the powerful feelings which nature had implanted in his heart, and parted with his first born child. While he gazed on the babe with delight, the recollection of his crimes arose like a terrible vision. When he pressed it with fervor to his heart, the guilt that was buried there would rise in monk hon, and poison the joy which he

he experienced from these innocent pleasures. For let it not be deemed a solecism in his character, that he felt the most exquisite affection towards his child. The most abandoned have given strong proofs of their attachment towards their offspring, and the parent who is naturally destitute of this feeling, or who endeavours to expel from his bosom that sensation which nature has planted there, is a monster, which fortunately seldom appears in the world, to shock the outraged feelings of humanity and degrade the species. To the agonized mind of Mörner, the presence of his innocent child became a punishment more exquisite than can be conceived. How could he expect a return of affection from his offspring, when the malicious world would soon teach them it was not his due? How could he, sullied as he was with crimes, look into the face of that innocent being,

ing,

ing, who might one day upbraid him with having given life to a necessary victim of heaven's vengeance? To behold his child driven to desperation by this thought, and becoming at once familiar with the utmost extremity of his fate,—regardless of crime, as being certain of punishment,—giving rein to his passions,—perhaps retracing his father's footsteps—his father's!—There was a terrible judgment in this idea of the Count's thus propagating vice by example, from which his mind recoiled with horror. Such were the consequences of the gloomy doctrine of fatality which were ever present to the Count's imagination.

The study of astrology was so prevalent in these days, that it was usual to cast the nativities of children of noble birth. Count Mörner did not neglect this necessary ceremony. His agitation was extreme, until the fate
of

of his child was foretold to him ;— but . his distraction may be conceived, when he was informed that the star of the house of Merner was clouded—the path of the infant beset with misfortunes— the child in danger of being murdered by his own father ! — The Count would hear no more. He sought to conceal his agony in the privacy of his own chamber, from which he never stirred for weeks ; — he failed to approach his child—his very looks might blast it. There was but one remedy which the Count at length adopted. He allowed the agonized mother but one look, one embrace. In the silence of night the child was conveyed to distant relations, who resided in a foreign clime ; a report of its death was spread abroad, and the Count subsided into a gloomy kind of satisfaction, when he had surrendered up the possession of the only object which might have rendered

dered

dered his existence valuable, but which his dark conscience whispered to him he was totally unworthy to enjoy.

About a year before this relation commences, Eleonora and Herman (who was the confidant of the Count,) presented to him a youth whom they stated to be that very son whom so many years before he had confided to the guardianship of his relatives. It is not necessary to state here the particular reasons which induced the Count to give credit to their assertions. The youth was of a delicate constitution, and sickly aspect. The Count gave him the epithet of *Mehnlos*, or *The Innocent*, and he entertained hopes that his life and fortunes would accord with his propitious name. Nevertheless the youth drooped from day to day: and on the arrival of Rezzonico, the Count besought him to prescribe a remedy for his son's disease; for so cautious

cautious was he to prevent the youth from being informed of the calamities which hung over their house, that he would not consent to let him be removed to the neighbourhood of Riddarholmen, near to which the benevolent and skilful monk Laurentius dwelt. On this application of the Count, Rezzonico smiled maliciously upon the youth, and promised to exert all his medical skill for his recovery. To the diabolical mind of Rezzonico it appeared to be a simple and politic measure, to speed the sickly youth to his grave: he was the only obstacle that stood between him and his aspiring hopes. As to the Count—his declining years—his mind's infirmity—or some speedier chance, might close his days;—and then, the confident of his death-bed confession—of his crimes—of his hopes—of his fears—and of his gratitude,—the confessor already counted

counted the gains of his convent! He contemplated in his mind's eye, the luxuriant prospect of swelling woods, waving corn, hill and dale, which might at one sweep be taken from St. Bridget's; of its princely possessions. It was in vain that Rezzonico flattered the Count with hopes of his son's amendment, and exaggerated the merit of each new medicine. The youth altered rapidly for the worse, and he became at length unable to leave his bed.

Distracted with grief, the Count, accompanied by Rezzonico, departed in search of Laumentius; and having acquainted the good father with the state of his son's infirmity, he obtained from him a promise that he would speedily follow him to Cronberg. The breaking down of the Count's carriage, on their return, obliged them to seek a shelter beneath the eut of Axel Olof.

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We have already related the extraordinary impression made on Adolphus's mind by the appearance of this stranger accompanied by his relentless enemy Rezzonico at the cottage on the lake. The Count's horror at hearing the name of Olof almost overcame his habitual caution and prudence, for he trembled to find himself beneath the roof of the descendant of that Ulrica, whose curse . . . had blasted the fortunes of his house and eclipsed the lustre of their honourable name.— The affliction which this thought gave him was changed in a moment to triumph. He was struck by the extraordinary opportunity it afforded him of revenge; nay, more—by leaping at once into the gulph, and by a self-devoted sacrifice to obtain for his descendants the redemption of that anathema which hung over them, and whose baleful influence would last as long.

Rezzonico had long since been informed of all the facts relative to those traditions which held so remarkable an influence over the prosperity of the Mörner family. He observed the struggle in the Count's mind and attempted by throwing out hints, although very obscurely, on the subject, to dissipate his scruples. Rezzonico might be said never to perform an action, or express an opinion, which might not be traced to an interested motive. He had recognized Adolphus at the first glance, in spite of the humble dress he then wore; and felt humiliated that all his attempts had been frustrated by a boy. He had long since numbered him with the dead: for it was he who, on his passage to Sweden, recognized Adolphus at Ham-
burgh, and supplied the Jew with a subtle poison, which he promised for a certain sum of money to infuse into the drink of Adolphus. The con-
fessor

fessor had not so much money at his command, but he observed a stranger who watched Adolphus as narrowly as himself. He penetrated into his design, and found it was the same as his own. He offered to become the humble instrument of the stranger's vengeance, received from him the money to corrupt the Jew, and then quitted Hamburgh in the hopes that he should never behold the face of Adolphus again. The stranger with whom Rezzonico got thus acquainted was Wildebrand, who, enraged that his plot of assassinating Adolphus at Glatz had been frustrated, had pursued him to Hamburgh; but afraid of engaging with him in combat like an honourable knight, he was rejoiced at the expedient proposed by Rezzonico. The estates of the Count de Beaumarchais had been sequestered, and by the active influence of Rezzonico, his con-

vent was entitled in remainder, after the death of the Countess Marcellina, to inherit these possessions. But strange reports were abroad. The influence of the Guise party in France might decline, and in the event of a Protestant prince of the house of Navarre ascending the throne, the rightful heir of the De Beaumarchais family would be reinstated in his possessions, and the vision of their wealth would vanish into air. Rezzonico had not communicated to Count Mörner any thing relative to his discovery of Adolphus at the cottage. The Count had taken him for the son of Axel, and the monk did not undeceive him. He even alluded to the threatening visage of the young peasant, when he sat opposite to the Count. He subtly contrasted the fine form, the exquisite proportion and manly beauty of Axel's son, with the meagre form and sickly habit

habit of his own. He added to the Count's already excruciating sufferings the torments of envy and jealousy; and he endeavoured to goad him on with the utmost art to his purpose, without letting him perceive what could possibly be the drift of his intent. Incited by this fiend, and impelled by his desire of revenge, the miserable man bade Rezzonico retire to his apartment, and pretended to throw himself on the bed to sleep, while in reality 'twas but to plan the horrors of the night. He waited till every soul was at rest 'ere he proceeded to his purpose. But in this he was deceived, for Rezzonico was on the watch. His own fears, as we have related, saved him the commission of these crimes. But Rezzonico, who watched his steps, and believed that he had completed his purpose, came upon him, accurately calculating, as

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he thought, to be just in time to witness the catastrophe, detect the criminal, and give him warning of the fire which now raged in the lower part of the cottage, which the impudent hand of Rezzonico himself had kindled, in order to render the perpetration of the crime complete, and to banish every fear of suspicion attaching to themselves at any future period. No retrospect was taken of the subject when they escaped from the burning ruins of Axel's cottage. There was a mutual understanding on this head, arising from the Count's dread of the confessor, and the latter's fears lest the Count should think that he had gone too far, or . . . had seen too much ; which induced them to avoid making it a subject of conversation. They proceeded quickly and silently along the sandy beach ; Rezzonico exulting in his triumph, and the Count
now

now and then turning his head towards the ascending fire with savage extacy, and glutting his eyes with the prospect of the devouring flames. They found their boat at some distance, according to appointment, containing their carriage and servants; and without waiting for the dawn the Count travelled all night on his way to Cronberg. The youth still declined, under the regimen of Rezzonico, and the Count expected the arrival of Laurentius with the utmost impatience and anxiety. Prayers for his convalescence were now offered up in the neighbouring convents; and the Count, by the promise of magnificent donations and splendid offerings on the re-establishment of his son's health, sought to bribe high heaven to yield to his desire. Masses were said in the chateau of Cronberg in the morning, in the evening, and at mid-day; and the

hoary hypocrite, while he bent over the bed of the dying and counted the feeble indications of his pulse, threw up a look of imploring mercy towards Heaven, and aspirated a prayer to the Most High for the recovery of Mehnlos.

It was late in the evening when the inmates of the château were disturbed by the cry of the warder from his tower, and by the tolling of the bell, which announced a stranger. The Count started from his couch, for he was in hopes it was the long expected Laurentius. He proceeded to his chair of state to receive him, accompanied by Rezzonico, while his grooms and vassals ranged themselves along the hall of entrance on each side of the portal. The Count's chair was raised on an elevated step, and on it the achievements of the Mörner family shone in gold. On the back of
it

it leaned Rezzonico, with his cowl thrown back and his thoughtful dark-brooding visage resting on his skinny hand. A window rose from the floor to the roof behind them, and through its rich stained glass, which was crowded with the armorial bearings and devices of the house, the setting sun shot a flood of crimson, and streamed on their dark figures.

A youth, who was clad in a rich habit, advanced and made his obeisance to the Count. It was.. Adolphus ; who was stunned with surprise when he recognized Rezzonico and the stranger who appeared with him at the cottage. Rezzonico's brow lowered when he beheld Adolphus, and the Count started back aghast at the appearance of him whom he believed to be the hated son of Axel. Adolphus put his hand into his bosom, and drew forth from its place of security that

precious letter which had been his care amid the greatest misfortunes. He presented it to the Count, who took it with a trembling hand, and had no sooner perused it than he turned pale, and exclaimed, "Ha! what does this betide?—It is his signature!—You, confessor, are acquainted with the hand writing of the Count de Beaumarchais?"

"It *may* be his hand writing," replied Rezzonico coldly, after he had glanced on the signature.

"It *is* his hand writing," cried Adolphus, indignantly.

"Ha! that voice!" said the Count, "and yet... it makes my blood turn cold;—who can'st thou be?"

"An impostor, most assuredly," exclaimed Rezzonico, "who has forged this scroll to dupe you."

Adolphus touched the hilt of his sword with his hand—paused for a moment,

moment, while his manly cheeks were suffused with the blush of shame, and his eyes darted indignant fire on them both.

“ An impostor !” cried the Count—
 “ thou should’st know him, Rezzonico
 “ —thou must have seen him many
 “ years ago when confessor to the
 “ Countess Marcellina. ‘ Speak ! oh
 “ speak ! relieve me from this racking
 “ uncertainty.” •

“ To the power who dwells beyond
 “ the stars, I appeal,” cried Rezzonico
 with fervor ; “ before Heaven I swear,
 “ I never beheld this youth ’ere the
 “ night we reposed at the cottage on
 “ the lake.”

“ I shall not appeal to that God,
 “ whom yon monk deceives,” cried
 Adolphus ; “ but I assert that I am
 “ the son of the late Count de Beau-
 “ marchais : here (*grasping his sword*)
 “ is my answer to those who would

“doubt my truth?”—(*after a pause*)
“who questions it?” exclaimed he,
looking round him proudly.

“And yet, if he speaks what he
“thinks the truth, he speaks false-
“ly,” muttered the Count to himself,
and examining Adolphus with great
attention.

“Who questions it?” cried Adol-
phus passionately, and at the same
time drawing his sword.

“Ha! my life! he threatens my
“life!” cried the Count, whose ex-
treme agitation was nearly depriving
him of his senses, “save me, powers
“of Heaven!”

The Count fell senseless in a pa-
roxysm when he had uttered these
words. His mind had been greatly
agitated during this conversation, and
his exhausted and feverish frame could
no longer bear up under the wild emo-
tions of his soul. Adolphus repented
instantly

instantly of his hastiness, and would have stooped to raise the Count, but he was interrupted by Rezzonico, who was well pleased at this occurrence, and who ordered four strong vassals to bear the Count in their arms to his chamber. Adolphus would have instantly retired, but as soon as the Count was borne from the hall, Rezzonico turned to the warder Herman, and gave him strict injunctions to keep Adolphus a prisoner until the recovery of the Count, who might then deal with so desperate a ruffian according to his own will and pleasure.

Adolphus stood thunderstruck ; he expostulated with the warder, for Rezzonico had retired ; he addressed himself to the vassals, but they would not hear him ; they had been accustomed to obey Rezzonico during the Count's frequent fits of illness, and Herman commanded them to drag

Adolphus to his dungeon. This Herman was the only servant whom the Count retained in his service after his departure from Riddarholmen. It was the general surmise that he knew too many of the Count's secrets to be thrown at large upon the world, and the popular feeling which prevailed so generally to the prejudice of the Count's character did not hesitate to give him ample credit for the choice of his confidant. To the dark countenance of a savage, he added the gloomy expression of an unsettled and dissatisfied mind ; and while Adolphus pondered on and examined the dark lines of his visage, he could gather no hope to encourage him in attempting to soften the feelings of such a villain.

The dungeon of Adolphus was scarcely secured, ere the violent ringing of the bell again, and the running to and fro of the vassals, announced the

the arrival of the long expected Laurentius. He visited the chamber of the sick, and found him past all hope. The Count had just recovered from his swoon when the name of Laurentius met his ear; he inquired for the good father, and ordered his vassals to conduct him instantly to his chamber. Laurentius was closeted with the Count for some hours. At the conclusion of the conference the Count rose in anger, and gave instant orders that Adolphus should be released from his confinement and sent forthwith to meet him in the chamber of Mehnlos. Adolphus, overjoyed at his unexpected deliverance, proceeded to the sick chamber. The Count and Laurentius were conversing in low tones in one part of the chamber while Rezzonico stood at the bedside of the sick youth, over whom a lamp diffused a feeble and unsteady light. Adolphus felt
exquisite

exquisite pleasure at the sight of the good Laurentius, and he hailed his presence as a good omen. The Count seemed impelled by some extraordinary emotion ; he seized the hand of Adolphus and led him towards the bed. Mehnlos now lay in a tranquil state, which always followed the subsiding of those pangs which racked him at intervals. His face was pale and seemed already covered with the dew of death—his bones stood out sharp and prominent—his muscles fell, as though the inward spirit shrunk within its fleshy nook—a mist seemed to cloud his vision, and his eyes rested, without meaning, on all things, as though they were no longer capable of receiving an external impression ; yet a faint and momentary gleam of pleasure beamed in them when Mörner spoke, for the youth really loved the Count. Rezónico, when he beheld the group approaching

proaching the bed, looked sternly at Adolphus and displeased with the Count. He muttered something about the impropriety of introducing a stranger at such a crisis. The Count was too much occupied with his own feelings to give attention to this observation of Rezzonico. The confessor muffling himself up in his cowl threw a piercing look of inquiry on Laurentius, as though he would read the inward purpose of his soul, and waited with seeming patience for the termination of this extraordinary scene.

Laurentius sat down beside the pillow of the sick youth, and counted the throbs of his feeble pulse, while the Count compared the countenance of Mehnlos and Adolphus with the most scrupulous attention. "Ah! if I had been sent for sooner!" exclaimed Laurentius. "He might have died nevertheless."

“nevertheless,” observed Rezzonico, smiling malignantly.

“His sufferings are great,” remarked Laurentius with a sigh. “They will be the sooner over, holy father,” replied Rezzonico.

“Was it for this I fondled thee?” exclaimed the Count gazing upon Mehnlos; “was it for this I gave full scope to my heart’s yearnings towards thee? Poor insect! when thou stood’st shivering in the breeze, how have I guarded thee and defended thee from the rough elements which threatened to crush thy feeble frame! What art thou? a child of guilt,—offspring of dishonour,—instrument of falsehood! oh! how have I honoured the wicked in thee!—how fondly I have *loved* thee—how bitterly do I *hate* thee now!”

“Spare him at this hour;—in his hour of trial spare him;—he at least

“is

“ is innocent ;” said Laurentius to the Count.

“ Curses blast them who sent him ;
“ may the mind’s misery and fell dis-
“ ease rive them who have thus sported
“ with the dearest bonds of nature !”

Rezzonico fixed a look of astonishment on the Count ;—he endeavoured to collect himself, and he braced his mind for the reception of some new wonder.

“ Fix not thine eyes on me,” continued the Count still addressing Mehnlos without heeding Laurentius, “ there
“ is falsehood in them !”

“ Alas ! he hears thee not,” cried Laurentius, “ the pains of death are
“ on him !”

The Count, who was totally absorbed in the reflections which the contemplation of the dying Mehnlos drew from him, seemed almost unconscious of the presence of those around him,
and

and watched the countenance of the youth which seemed to give some sign of returning intelligence. His eyes looked up languidly, and in a sound scarcely articulate he uttered the name of "*Father*," when the faint pleasure which illuminated them when he pronounced it vanished, and he closed them seemingly in a struggle of pain.

"He stands on the very verge of "fearful expectancy," exclaimed the Count, "and yet he blasts his soul's prospects by a lie!—Oh! foul and damned falsehood, why should it thus journey with you into a world unknown and into the presence of "all-fearful things!"

"The struggle is over," said Laurentius; "that was the last pang of parting nature:—he is no more!"

"Let us join, holy father," exclaimed Rezzonico eagerly, "in offering
— "ing

“ing up our prayers for the departed soul;—and toll ye the bell,” cried he loudly to the attendants in the anti-room, “and lift up your voices in prayer; for behold the Count’s son is dead!”

The Count withdrew his eyes from the contemplation of the departed, and fixed them on Adolphus, exclaiming frantically, “He lives! he lives! he is here! (throwing himself on the neck of Adolphus) behold! my son!”

Adolphus shuddered, and an icy chill pervaded his frame when he felt himself pressed to the bosom of this new father; his feelings and his heart recoiled from his embrace, and a strong expression of incredulity was painted in his features.

“It is true, my son,” observed Laurentius, “you *are* the son of Count Magnus Mörner:—when you have leisure I will detail to you all the particulars,

“particulars, which will prove my assertion.—You have been awfully led by the hand of Providence itself to your natural protector. Kneel, my son, and prove yourself worthy to receive your father’s benediction.”

Adolphus’s mind became confused; the croud of new and extraordinary ideas which rushed in upon it overwhelmed him; he no longer hesitated, but, obeying the injunctions of Laurentius, bent himself lowly on his knees before the Count. The Count, who now observed Adolphus kneeling before him, seemed like one whom this sight had awakened from a deep reverie; he looked round him with inquietude. Laurentius gently reminded him that Adolphus his son demanded his blessing. The Count started wildly and exclaimed incoherently, “Blessing!—Yes! yes! my son.... God! ... the Almighty!.... the Father!”

“My

“ —My blessing! ’Tis a curse—nay
“ do not fear me, Adolphus, I would
“ not harm thee for worlds.—Mercy,
“ Heaven! Ha! ha! ha!” The Count
now broke forth into a frenzied laugh;
his limbs sunk beneath him, and it was
necessary to bear him once more to
his chamber.

Rezzonico had disappeared, and Laurentius pressed Adolphus to retire from this sad spectacle to the chamber which the attendants had been ordered to prepare for him. ’Ere he quitted the room, Laurentius approached the body, lifted up the cloth with which they had covered the face of the departed, and took a last look of the unfortunate Mehnlos. He was surprised at the change which had already taken place in his countenance; but on looking more accurately he beheld a remarkable appearance which struck him with horror! for to his experienced mind it

now

now became evident that the death of Mehnlos was caused by poison. He communicated this suspicion, but in a very guarded manner, to Adolphus, who did not hesitate to ascribe to Rezzonico all the guilt of this new offence. Laurentius gave a very faint contradiction to this surmise, but he felt great reluctance to charge a minister of God's word with the commission of so heinous a crime, although from being acquainted with the part he had acted in the story which Adolphus related to him, he could not hesitate internally to believe him capable of attempting the worst of crimes. Adolphus, on consultation with Laurentius, found it was impossible to convert their suspicions into such evidence as would tend to criminate Rezzonico: and he felt in no slight degree dismayed and disappointed that he could not; for as he was now likely to become an inmate of

of Cronberg, the presence of the confessor seemed to threaten him with new dangers, if not with a similar fate to that which cut off the unfortunate Mehnlos. Laurentius accompanied Adolphus to his chamber, which was one of the most magnificent which the luxurious château of Cronberg afforded, and 'ere he retired to rest the good father explained to Adolphus those facts on which the assertion of Count Mörner and his own were founded.

We have already noticed those considerations which influenced the Count in parting with his only son in his infancy. The child was conveyed by Herman to the Count de Beaumarchais, who was brother to the Countess Eleonora. De Beaumarchais, who at that time had no children of his own, received the infant with delight; and derived considerable satisfaction in being

ing chosen the instrument of rescuing the child of a favourite sister from the bad example of a father, with whose vices he was not acquainted in sufficient time to save his sister from her wretched fate. The Countess Marcellina found considerable amusement in the society of the child, during the frequent absences of the Count de Beaumarchais in the wars of Francis the First. She looked forward with religious fervor, in the hope of educating Adolphus in the Catholic faith, and thus saving him from the perdition which it was her belief the religion of his country would have doomed him to.

We have seen in the commencement of ~~this~~ history how the hopes entertained by the Countess were frustrated. The attachment of the Count de Beaumarchais increased with the years of the child, and the accounts which he received

received from Sweden to the disadvantage of his father's character prevented him from announcing to Adolphus the secret of his birth. He witnessed with a delight, which became the reward of his care, the gradual expanding of those precious blossoms of mind, which paternal asperity or gloomy and forbidding distance would have nipped in the bud. He beheld in Adolphus the reflected image of his own virtues, and he could not harbour without pain the idea — that his form, blooming with health and beauty, and adorned with all the graces which chivalry bestows upon her brightest ornament, might become one day bent beneath the torture of heaven-inflicted punishment, and his mind enervated by the discipline to which bigotted monks condemn the victims of superstition. The Count de Beaumarchais suffered himself to be swayed by these consi-

derations; and only for the affection which led Adolphus, and the spirit which sustained him in the execution of the most arduous of duties, and which enabled him to be a witness of the Count's melancholy fate, ... the secret might have descended with the Count de Beaumarchais into the grave. The Count de Beaumarchais did not feel himself justified in withholding the means from Adolphus at this juncture, which might enable him to put himself under the protection of his father; but he did not think it right to inform Adolphus so fully with regard to his situation, as might put it out of the power of Count Mörner to exercise any discretion on that head.

In relating to Adolphus the particulars of his birth, Laurentius endeavoured with extreme delicacy, while he was addressing the son, to throw a veil over the frailties of the mother;

mother ; but it was impossible to conceal from Adolphus, that the miserable ~~Mehmas~~ was a natural son of the Countess ~~Isabella~~ ^{Isabella}, and that his father was the eldest son of the Prince de Zaremberg ; who having witnessed the charms of the Countess at court, fell violently in love with her. The guilty fruit of this amour had been educated in privacy by the Countess, at some distance from Riddarholmen. Almost immediately after the birth of this child, the young Prince de Zaremberg disappeared in a most unaccountable manner ; and from the circumstance of the Count of Mórner having about that time discovered the intrigue, it was generally supposed that the Prince perished by the daggers of the Count's assassins. However, this was a transaction involved in great mystery ; and the friends of the Prince were not even enabled to

pay the last respects to his remains, for his body was never found. Count Morner treated the Countess with great cruelty on the discovery of her crime—but the child was so carefully concealed, that it eluded all the inquiries which were made after it by the agents of the Count, who was actuated no doubt in this search by the most cruel and sanguinary intentions. The Countess, when she was scarcely recovered from the pains of childbed, was informed in a very sudden manner of the dreadful fate of the Prince. She was thrown into a state of extreme agitation, and the consequence was a temporary deprivation of her reason. Having made the study of medicine for several years his constant employment, Laurentius was sent for, in order to prescribe for the malady of the Countess. He succeeded in restoring her to an interval

interval of reason, and out of gratitude Eleonora chose him for her confessor. She was still, however, subject to periods of insanity, and on those occasions, as Laurentius did not find it convenient to reside at Cronberg, the Countess was removed to Riddarholmen. She soon communicated to the good Laurentius the secret of her son's residence; and in the course of years, the society of this youth, which she enjoyed by stealth, contributed to restore her health and prolong her lucid intervals. In consequence of the civil wars in France, several years elapsed, during which no tidings were received of the Count de Beaumarchais or Adolphus. She had every reason to suppose that Adolphus perished in the general wreck; for after the execution of the Count de Beaumarchais, which was known in the north of Europe, it was very currently

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reported

reported that Adolphus had suffered the same fate. After lamenting for some time the untimely end of Adolphus, Eleonora conceived the extraordinary resolution of substituting Mehulos in his place. She was particularly tempted to form this plan, by reflecting on the forlorn situation of this delicate youth, in the event of her decease; as she had not the power of leaving him any part of her property, not even so much as might enable him to support a decent existence. The difference in their ages she considered no obstacle. At the age of manhood it is less perceptible; and besides, the ill-health of Mehulos had given to his face a solemn character, that made him look much older than he really was. The moment Eleonora conceived this plan, she hastened to prepare it for execution. She was herself an adept in French literature; she communicated

municated to Mehnlos all the riches of her native language, and all the graces of her manners ; and through her means he became furnished with documents which might have staggered the most incredulous of belief.

About this time Herman, the Count's confidant, had discovered by accident the place in which Mehnlos was concealed. Eleonora, distracted with grief, had besought him on her knees to spare her son's life, and not to betray him into the power of her husband. Herman was gained by woman's tears, and complied the sooner from some stings of conscience which then began to goad him. Eleonora, however, still found herself at the mercy of Herman, who, according to his temper or his necessity, would always have it in his power to betray her. She attempted to put this totally out of his power by inducing him to

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embark

embark in the same perilous enterprise with herself. She made several vain attempts to win the moody Herman to her purpose. He was inexorable except when urged on one particular head, and there she triumphed. This was her lord's state of health—his mind's malady—To give him an object that would so strongly interest him as his child, was prescribing him a cure;—besides, Adolphus, she stated to Herman, was dead—there was no one injured—no one defrauded of the heirship. To these arguments Herman yielded; for he loved the Count, and his gloomy soul paid him the homage of unbought affection. He believed the Count was attached to him; and the effect of early affection, and the habit of similar propensities, had knit the bond between these villains. Herman, therefore, who exhibited a strange compound of savage vice
and

and stern virtue, who would have willingly poured forth the last drop of his blood to ease his master of one heart's pang, and would have resisted a bribe of countless millions to do him an injury, now assisted in maturing the Countess's plan, from the pure wish of doing him a service, and, like most villains, he did not go out of his way to consider too nicely of the means. Laurentius had been made acquainted with this plan when it was too late to retract; however, he did not give it any very active opposition when he was informed of the certainty of the death of the Count's son. The narrative of Adolphus first undeceived him; and the appearance of the narrator singularly interested him. He was prevented from communicating the truth to Adolphus by the consideration of the singular confusion it would create; and while he determined

to watch the steps of Adolphus, he revolved in his own mind the best means of unravelling this intricate web. The Countess was at that period at Riddarholmen. The illness of Mehnlos had affected her to that degree that her mind was again thrown back into a state of darkness; and Laurentius determined to wait until the recovery of his patient, when he might be enabled to advise with her what course it was prudent to pursue in the present emergency. He waited anxiously for this event, but to his inexpressible mortification her disease acquired new strength every day, and she was obliged to be closely confined to the apartments of the castle. When Laurentius mentioned this circumstance to Adolphus, he recollected the extraordinary figure which had presented itself to him in the chamber of Arvedina; he concluded it was the Countess

Countess Eleonora herself—his own mother—and he shrunk with terror on reflecting on this first awful meeting between a mother and her child. The recovery of the Countess was still extremely doubtful; and on the arrival of the Count to demand the exertion of the father's skill in prolonging the life of Mehnlos, Laurentius was almost determined to acquaint him with the truth. Motives of delicacy still restrained him, and he yielded to them; but the moment when, in secret conference, the Count informed him of the imprisonment of Adolphus in consequence of the dark insinuations of Rezzonico, Laurentius no longer hesitated to perform that duty which his own sense of justice prompted and the sacred dictates of truth commanded. He unfolded the whole of Adolphus's story to the unhappy Count, as cautiously as he could,

and with a tender regard to the feelings of others. The miserable man, who still writhed under his bodily torments, seemed inconsolable at the imposition which was practised upon him; he breathed nothing but deadly vengeance against the authors of it; and Laurentius left him in horror at hearing his imprecations against the Countess, Herman, Mehnlos, Rezzonico, and even Divine Providence itself.

When Laurentius quitted the chamber of Adolphus, it was already near morn, and the light of the stars began to fade away before the splendour of the rising sun. Adolphus grew restless and feverish on his bed of down, and it was long 'ere sleep visited his gilded couch. Frightful visions disturbed his rest, and an hideous phantom, on whose forehead the word DESTINY burned in letters of light, pursued him as he fled, and forcing him

him

him on with the point of a mighty spear, thrust him towards the edge of a precipice; at which moment Adolphus awoke in terror. This dream affected him very sensibly, and he found it impossible to get rid of the thralldom of fear. He emerged from the cumbrous magnificence which surrounded him, like a guilty shade, who wanders lonely and sad from a crime-polluted spot. He felt that he was standing within the danger of the judgment, and yet he was innocent of all crime—but that awful and sacred denunciation, “the sins of the *fathers* shall be visited on the *children*,” took away from him even the consolation of hope. “I ~~am~~ sacrificed to the manes of the injured,” thought Adolphus, “for the crimes of my ancestor!—Oh! Sigismund, when the evil one tempted thee to crimes, why was not thine arm stayed by the
“soul-

“ soul-harrowing thought, that thy
“ descendants, yet unborn, must pay
“ the penalty? How awful is the
“ thought of this entailed suffering—
“ this punishment felt in the remotest
“ branches, and thrilling with pain
“ the extremities of distant genera-
“ tions! Yet if a sacrifice, let me be
“ a guiltless and unspotted one. Oh
“ God! in my hour of calamity I fly
“ to thee—take me now unspotted,
“ unpolluted. I bow my head to re-
“ ceive thy avenging stroke—yet still
“ I bless thy name, oh! my God!”

Adolphus was fortified in his good resolutions by the counsels of Laurentius, and it was with considerable pain that he heard of his approaching departure. The Count had recompensed him munificently for his journey and attendance, and his affairs would not permit him to make a longer stay at Ronberg.

Adolphus

Adolphus was now left to the enjoyment of his splendid misery, and it was with an aching heart that he partook of the sumptuous banquet which was provided for him. The Count was sufficiently recovered to preside on this occasion in the great hall. It was with considerable pleasure that Adolphus observed that Rezzonico did not appear; but he felt too much awed by the strangeness of his situation, to trust himself with any disclosure of his suspicions respecting him, in his conversation with his father. The Count's character and manners were not of that description which invites the young and the dependant to openness of heart. His aspect was forbidding, and he knew no medium between the cold austerity of imposing manner and the warmth of an unguarded temper, which would at times break through all restraint. Adolphus
felt

felt himself chilled in his presence, and it was with considerable reluctance he obeyed the Count's order (after his grooms had withdrawn) to relate to him the events of his life.

Adolphus, while he obeyed his father, gave but a faint outline of what we have already related, and he did not allow himself to relate the secrets of his attachment to Edla. In relating the mysterious appearance of the Hungarian, the Count's attention was deeply excited; he was thrown into violent agitation, and the deep groans which he uttered shewed that his frame shook with a recollection of a similar communion with the world of spirits. Adolphus, who feared that his father might be visited with an attack similar to that which he had witnessed on the preceding evening, rapidly passed over this part of his narrative, and hastened to describe the

friendly

friendly reception which he had met with from Axel Olof, and the attention of those good peasants, to whom he attributed his being saved from inevitable death. The Count could no longer brook the praises which Adolphus unconsciously bestowed upon those whom his father chose to denigrate his bitterest enemies.

“Never,” cried the Count, “let
 “their hateful name pollute the lips
 “of a descendant of mine—they are
 “enemies to me and mine. I abhor
 “them, and could quaff their hearts’
 “best blood. Nay, Adolphus, do not
 “remonstrate with your father—it is
 “enough for thee to know I execrate
 “their hated race. I *hate* them—I
 “should hate a son who did not *curse*
 “them with me. Nay, I could an-
 “nihilate him—leave him to wither
 “on the dunghill of the society he
 “had chosen, and view with pleasure
 “his

“ his bones bleaching on the spot
“ where first sunk his dishonoured
“ name ! Fall on thy knees, my son—
“ lift up to heaven thy hands as I do
“ now, and *curse* them. Let our ma-
“ lediction fall heavy on them. May
“ the curse of pestilence and loathsome
“ disease strike them—and may fa-
“ mine blast them—for *they* have curs-
“ ed me and mine for ever !”

While the Count still knelt, and Adolphus, horror struck, would have braved even the anger of his terrible father sooner than obey him in his wicked purpose, they were interrupted by the tolling of a dismal bell. The Count started up and furiously demanded what it meant. “ It is the
“ bell of death,” replied Adolphus, and just at that moment a chorus of voices were heard chaunting a requiem. “ It is the funeral of Mehnlos,” observed Adolphus. The body now
passed

passed the grand entrance, followed by the vassals who had attended on the deceased. A number of youths headed the procession, strewing nosegays along the path which led to the cemetery, and it was closed by Rez-zonico, who followed with his face concealed in his vestments, as though the hypocrite mourned him whom he had sent to his untimely doom.

The appearance of this melancholy ceremony seemed to have given a new turn to the Count's ideas—his eyes sparkled with rage, and he was completely inflamed by the appearance of Hermán, who crossed the court to give some directions respecting the interment. Transported with fury, the Count rushed after him, and Adolphus, glad to escape from a scene which had been so harrowing to his feelings, and impressed with the dreadful thought that he owed his being to
a man

a man whom he could not love, sought the retirement of his own apartment, where he passed another night,—joyless, hopeless, and unrefreshed.

CHAP. VIII.

For neither man nor Angel can discern
Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks
Invisible, except to God alone,
By his permissive will through Heav'n and earth.

MILTON.

REZZONICO had witnessed with the deepest surprise the events which had lately taken place at Cronberg. With some mysteries which concerned the families of De Beaumarchais and Mörner he had become acquainted, by having discovered an iron box full of papers in the ruins of St. Blois, at the time that Adolphus paid his last visit to the seat of his supposed ancestors. Of the events which had taken place the preceding evening, he did not entertain the remotest suspicion ; but he suffered

ed not his mind to be stunned or overpowered by occurrences which he had not foreseen, or by chances which he had not calculated. Active, wily, and adroit, he studied the characters in the awful drama in which he acted so principal a part, and he discriminated those delicate shades in them, which were reflected from the varying events of each succeeding day. It was not without infinite study and contemplation that Rezzonico had been enabled to lift himself above the heads of the lazy drones of his order ;—his elevation above his fellows, and that distinction which he had gained beyond the narrow and jealous world of his monastery, he had obtained neither by superior sanctity, deeper learning, valuable friends, nor powerful interest—he owed it to his quick observation of *character* alone,—to his speedy development of it, and his consequent yielding

yielding subserviency. By these means he quickly insinuated himself into the good opinion of his brother Franciscans, and upon their shoulders he rose to elevation. His well timed and artful flattery—his meek demeanor,—his indulgence and wilful blindness to their faults and crimes, procured for him the friendship and protection of the great, while the talent and wonderful resources of mind which he displayed in the overthrow of his enemies, struck those who vilified him with dismay, and bound his friends still closer to him by the ties of admiration and fear. Rezzonico pondered much and deeply reflected—he analyzed the past, and seemed to scan the future. From the honour of the Abbot's chair in the monastery of St. Bridget's, his eye rose to the possession of the estates of Count Mörner and a bishop's crozier. He was dazzled

zled with the blushing honours of a cardinal—his ear already seemed to feast on the title of *your eminence*, and his vision ascended until it rested on the beatified mitre of St. Peter, which it contemplated in distant perspective, surrounded by all the splendours of the Vatican.

When it was discovered that Adolphus was the son of Count Mörner, the principal obstacle was removed which stood in the way of his brethren of St. Francis, and the enjoyment of the reversion of the estates of St. Blois seemed to be indisputably confirmed to them. But in the person of the Count d'Auvergne, the father of the Countess Marcellina, they had still a powerful competitor, for it was reported that he had demanded of the King the investiture of this fief, as a reward for his services, which had been conspicuously in the wars with the Hugonots.

gonots. Besides, it was more desirable to obtain the immense possessions of Count Mörner by a bequest, in which the services of the confessor himself would not be forgotten, than to become the mere partner in the division of a disputed succession in France. The personal influence which Rezzonico had acquired over the King of Sweden would serve him materially in his views of advancement; and, indeed; he looked upon the strengthening of this monarch in the principles of the Catholic religion, and the prospect of bringing back the whole nation to the allegiance of their ancient faith, as services which would act powerfully in his favour, and add great weight to the influence which he had already acquired at the Holy See.

Of all the vices which disfigured the mind of Rezzonico, hypocrisy predominated. To so great a degree did

he carry this vice, that in his affected zeal for the interests of his religion ; in the enthusiasm with which he espoused the cause of the holy church, he begot that warmth which at first he only affected, and while his zeal rapidly kindled, he absolutely deceived himself in thinking that he acted only for the interest of the church, at the moment that he was solely actuated by a regard to his own. In the advancement of these two great designs, which were seldom separated in the mind of Rezzonico, he allowed no obstacle either of morality or conscience to intervene. He was callous of heart, and troubled with no morbid sensibilities of nature. His iron constitution seemed to have steeled him against all the advances of the softer emotions of the soul, and he set in motion the weaker classes of mankind, as mere puppets of his will, ~~bitting~~ ^{bitting} them against one another

another in strife and in blood, as if he claimed no inheritance of common nature with them, but merely looked upon them as machines who were predestinated to abide his calling and perform his bidding. He was, therefore, familiar with crime and prodigal of life; yet even he was obliged to excite all the powers of his understanding, and call upon all the resources of his casuistry, in order to cope with an enemy which sometimes stirred up rebellion within him: this foe was his conscience. In order to still its voice, he would look abroad and glut his thirst for destruction with the roaring of the thunder, and the raging of the storm! He would send his imagination on the wing, and he would view the fire of heaven striking the dome of the palace, and the roof of the cottage, with equal wrath. He beheld the corse of the unjust man blackening in

its light ; yet the same bolt had crushed the meek piety of fourscore, and had descended in wrath upon the humble and blessed head. He distinguished amid the darkness of the waters, and the crashing of the elements, the portly argosies of the rich, the pious, and the brave : he drank in their shrieks in the pauses of the storm, and their calls on that God who seemed to have forsaken them in their need. And now all is still, save the wind's deep organ, which seems to discourse of the wonders of God, and of the world to come, while it wafts their unheard remains on the gloomy wave ! “ Where are “ they now ? ” Rezzonico would exclaim, “ they are sunk and swallowed “ up for aye—youth, age, and infancy “ are bound in brotherly bands together, and gone to view the wonders of the deep ! ” But when he elevated his ken, and took in a larger expanse

expanse of human misery—when he viewed the thousands and tens of thousands sacrificed in battle, and when he counted the heaps of the slain : when famine and pestilence descended upon the earth : what millions were sacrificed to the will of the all-powerful ; how insignificant were the lives of countless thousands when they thwarted his designs, or impeded the immense scale of his operations ! what should it avail, therefore, in the eye of man ?—in the eye of him who had devoted himself to his service, and covered himself with the robe of his blessedness ? . . .

By such wretched sophistry did Rez-zonico endeavour to lull that still small voice, which vainly whispered to him, when his passions ruled in their strength, and when he thought he was fain to obey : but the time must come to all when it will be heard ; and woe to those to whom its voice sounds ter-

rible and appalling ! The artful monk saw the necessity of changing towards Adolphus his manner, in proportion to the latter's change of fortune. He rarely intruded himself in his presence, and when he did, he was meek and seemingly devout, taciturn and humble. The courage which Adolphus had shewn in baffling the personal attacks of Rezzonico, caused the monk to shrink from another personal rencontre. He seemed now to have coiled up into himself all the sleceitful and dangerous sinuosities of his exterior, and he retired within his lair, couching and vigilant, until he saw the season approaching that would once more put his prey within his reach.

Count Mörner had latterly become displeased with Adolphus: the gloss of novelty no longer gave attractions to his new-found son ; he became capricious, firtful and suspicious towards him

him—he recollected the warmth with which he had defended the Olofs, and this galled him. Besides Adolphus had really drooped of late ; his vivacity forsook him, and his manner became frequently spiritless and vapid. The Count, who observed this change, chid him and remonstrated with him in vain : he complained also of Adolphus at the very moment when it was his own mind which teemed with all the evils he attributed to his son ; and, in the course of time, his very suspicions begot the evils themselves. If Adolphus was silent and gloomy, the Count would imagine it was owing to a discovery of his crimes, or was meant to reproach him with his misfortunes. If gay and voluble, the Count imagined he beheld a monster who treated his unfortunate father with disrespect, who had imported the levity of vicious climes to expose the austerity of his own manners,

H 4

manners, and who threatened to destroy the dignity of his household, by the contagion of vulgar gaiety and boisterous mirth. Under the influence of this treatment, Adolphus found it impossible to please ; and he saw, with grief and regret, that he every day lost some portion of the Count's favour, who would sometimes eye him with disgust and suspicion, and would then suddenly relapse into paroxysms of tenderness and affection. The Count had demanded of Rezzonico whether he had observed this change in the manner of Adolphus. The confessor, who wished to converse on this subject guardedly, replied, with affected indifference, that he had observed and lamented the change. The Count, after a pause, during which he had collected sufficient confidence to express his wonder at the cause which had disturbed his son's tranquillity, demanded

manded of the confessor whether he could guess the source from whence it proceeded? The confessor artfully took upon himself the defence of Adolphus, but it was only to betray him in consequences still more fatal to his repose. He finally suggested to the Count, that at the age of Adolphus, there were few passions which domineered with greater violence than love, and to prevent him falling into the snare of some base-born beauty, (if he unfortunately had not already fallen into that predicament, “which God, in his mercy,” said the confessor, “avert from your illustrious house!”) it became the Count to consider of an alliance worthy of his son, worthy of his endowments and of his rank.

“ ’Tis well thought of,” replied the Count musing.

“ His protracted stay at the cottage of those wretched peasants has al-

“ways astonished me,” observed Rezzonico; “He stayed there long after
“he was cured of his wounds by Lau-
“rentius.”

“He sojourned long, too long, by
“heavens!” exclaimed the Count
stamping with fury.

“And yet their kindness to him
“seems extraordinary,” said Rezzonico,

“Most extraordinary,” cried the
Count; “and from such base vulgar
“loons.”

“Yet not without a design,” artfully observed Rezzonico, “were they
“kind. ’Tis honour, courtesy, and the
“polish of exalted birth throws open
“the halls of our nobles to the house-
“less stranger. ’Tis interest, sordid
“interest alone which sways the vul-
“gar hind. I have often thought. . . .”

“What hast thou thought, con-
“fessor?”

“fessor?” demanded the Count anxiously.

“’Tis but a thought, a surmise,” said Rezzonico.

“Be not so tedious in your preamble,” said the Count hastily.

“That Christina,” continued Rezzonico.—

“Hah! Olof’s daughter,” exclaimed the Count.

“May have gained the affections of your son,” said Rezzonico,—
“but the zeal with which I espouse the interests of your illustrious family may have led me to magnify trifles which may be illusive and fallacious—there is a way—but, I fear, my Lord, I weary you.”

“Proceed, confessor; you cannot tire me on this theme.—I love that boy.—Yes, Heaven knows, with all his faults, he is entwined round my heart.”

“I meant to observe,” continued Rezzonico, “that we may discover if
“our suspicions are falsely grounded,
“by proposing for your son’s accept-
“ance an eligible alliance;—the young
“Baroness Ribbing, for instance—
“she is fair, and rich withal.”

“’Tis excellent, good father; this
“thought is good and admits of quick
“dispatch.”

“Nay, but ‘there is an obstacle,”
said Rezzonico; “the lady is a catho-
“lic, and your son. . . . has not yet
“abjured Lutheranism.—I say not
“yet. . . for the novelty of this new
“religion has lasted long enough—
“the fashion has gone by—and it is
“now full time for men of sense and
“of noble rank to lead the way and
“return to the God of their fathers
“—to the God of Abraham, and of
“Isaac,” continued Rezzonico de-
voutly crossing himself.

“Adolphus

“ Adolphus is yet a Lutheran !” exclaimed the Count with astonishment.

So seldom was the Count penetrated by any sincere religious feeling, that his thoughts very rarely pointed that way, except in the hours when his disease preyed upon him. He now saw the immense consequence it was to the future advancement of Adolphus that he should abjure Lutheranism; for since the king of Sweden had adopted the religion of the church of Rome, the favour of the court flowed entirely among those who were of that persuasion.

Rezzonico perceived from the Count's agitation, that he had at length struck the chord on which the destinies of Adolphus would vibrate. He eyed the Count with a malignant smile of satisfaction when he beheld all the father rising up within him, and saw him struggling with

with that feeling which is spread through every link of nature, which led him to cherish and give full vent to the yearnings of affection which bound him with irresistible force to his own heart's blood,—and the peculiar cast of mind which distinguished the man, which would not allow him to brook opposition in an inferior, but impelled him to break down into obedience the impudent arrogation of independence of mind that dared to resist the shew of his authority, and which induced him to treat those dependents who did not surrender into his hands the powers of their understanding and the free charter of reason, as enemies to his peace and rebels to his will. Rezzonico ventured to suggest that Adolphus could not resist the influence of his father's example. —A son to differ from his father in the important article of their faith,—
to

to seek Heaven by a different gate :—
'twas youth reproaching age with criminal error, with blindness, or with ignorance ;—'twas foul, presumptuous, and most unnatural.

“ Let this day pass over our heads,” said the Count, striking his forehead with energy ; “ but, good father, on the morrow we shall see Adolphus at the blessed mass, or.....better it were for him he had never been born !”

Rezzonico was now satisfied at having sown this seed of discord between father and son, for he was convinced that trifles, light as air, would soon undermine him in the mind of his capricious and jealous father. The confessor had no occasion in this point to hoodwink his conscience, or dazzle it with a specious lure ; he certainly acted on this occasion according to his sense of justice, which unfortunately
was

was never tempered with mercy. His bigotry was so excessive, that he deemed he was performing an act pleasing in the eyes of God when he persecuted the members of sectarian churches. The holiness of the end, in his opinion, purified and justified the means, and the same conviction which led him to destroy the son through the heart of his father, would have justified him in tearing his limbs asunder on the rack, or binding him to the stake of persecution. Rezzonico did not calculate upon the consequences of this difference alone for the consummation of his work ; there was another bolt about to descend on the head of the Count which Rezzonico had spied, and the consequences of which he had contemplated from afar.

Since Adolphus had appeared in the character of the Count's heir, Count Mörner had been less devoted to the
cause

cause of the church—less zealous—less liberal, and consequently, in the opinion of the confessor, less devout. Touching those rich moveables which the Count had promised as a donation to the abbey of St. Bridget, Rezzonico could obtain no satisfaction; and the Count had put him off on this subject most scurvily from day to day. The confessor determined to strike a decisive blow, which should at once put the Count's life and reputation in his power; and according as he wished to be chary of them, so might he barter them against his estate. Rezzonico's secret visits to Herman, the Count's confidant, had been frequent of late; but the monk found it difficult at first to infuse any principles of religious terror into a mind which seemed to be without a knowledge of the Divinity itself. Over a mind of this stamp, Rezzonico found he could acquire

quire but little power; and although his situation as confessor gave him immense advantages in probing the minds of others and sifting them as he listed—using the awful name of the Most High, and the fears of an hereafter, as the common instruments of his trade in gaining the secrets of the guilty heart, in order to effect his own purposes, and pretending a more than common interest in the welfare of others, when he was utterly regardless of aught but his own—he yet found it unsafe to tamper with Herman, and he feared lest the smallest false step in so delicate a quarter might betray him to the Count, and ruin his prospects for ever.

An unlooked-for incident gave to Rezzonico the opportunity he wished, and supplied him with the means of executing his fell purpose. The sight of Herman on the evening of the funeral

neral ceremony of Mehnlos had excited all the fury of the Count's mind, on account of his having assisted in the substitution of this spurious offspring for his own. So great was his anger, that he forgot the decorum and dignity of his rank, and irritated by the calm replies of Herman, the Count felled him twice to the earth. This unfortunate sally of temper, heightened perhaps by the refusal of Adolphus to join him in his hatred of the family of Olof, was the source from whence the Count was overwhelmed with new misfortunes, and from which Rezzonico derived his present hopes. The gloomy Herman, mute and indignant at receiving this disgrace before his fellows, hied him to a solitary chamber, where in darkness and in solitude he brooded over the unworthy treatment he had received. His grief found vent neither in
tears

tears nor sighs, but curses loud and terrible marked the deep feeling which he harboured of his wrongs. For some hours he refused food—he appeared inconsolable, and it seemed to be with a bitter pang he parted with the only virtue which humanized him—loyalty to his master. Rezzonico had witnessed this scene with indifference in his eye, while his heart was overflowing with joy.

While Herman was consuming the gloomy hours of his seclusion in meditating vengeance and summing up a dreadful reckoning, Rezzonico presented himself before him at dead of night, and with a well feigned sincerity he condoled with him, and besought him to take comfort and advice. Rezzonico glanced artfully at the ingratitude of the Count, and he let fall words, with seeming inadvertence, which led Herman to suspect that the
Count

Count had criminated him to Rezzonico in confession—a suspicion which alarmed Herman beyond measure, and which was the very drift which Rezzonico aimed at. From the compassion which Rezzonico affected when he spoke of Herman's late quarrel with the Count, he endeavoured to insinuate that there was some scheme of vengeance in contemplation, against which it behoved Herman to be upon his guard. To Herman's guilty conscience this appeared but too probable, and from his knowledge of the Count's character, he determined not to leave his life in his power. Rezzonico quitted Herman with an ardent expression of hope that he might yet avoid the calamities which impended over him, and with an assurance of his own personal attachment and protection, which he might securely reckon on in whatever struggles it might be his fate to encounter.

encounter. Rezzonico had promised to visit Herman on the following morning ; but when he reached the gloomy chamber in which he had been concealed, the confessor found, to his inexpressible joy, that he had fled from the castle. Assuming a seeming ignorance of this event, he endeavoured so to comport himself that the Count might be compelled to require his assistance in this emergency.

Count Mörner had missed Herman for several days, and as he suspected the reason of his absence, he had conned over a kind of apology to repeat to his confidant when they should meet. Day after day passed over without his appearing, and at length the Count became exceedingly alarmed ; he inquired anxiously after him, and gave peremptory orders that he should attend his presence forthwith. The various excuses which his vassals had

had made for Herman's absence were now of no use, and they were obliged reluctantly to tell their lord the truth. The agitation into which the Count was thrown by his flight was so extreme, that he was threatened with a return of one of his usual attacks. He leaned by turns for support on the tenderness which Adolphus always expressed for him whenever his father was cast down by calamity, and on the well affected attachment which Rezzonico seemed anxious to press upon him in his hour of need. Rezzonico went further ; he expatiated on the advantages which religious consolation gives us, and on that assistance which we may derive from on high in our hour of calamity. He glanced on the prodigious power of the Church of Rome—he dwelt on the immense influence which the Holy Pontiff possessed over almost all the courts of Europe

Europe—he eulogized the amenity of his character, and that indulgence which he shewed towards his children, be their crimes ever so great—to those who were willing to make sacrifices for the good of the Church, and for the honour of God’s true religion—to those who were disposed to barter the treasures of this world for the treasures of the world to come.

The holy father was about to touch once more on those rich moveables which once appertained to the Abbey, when the Count interrupted him.

“ Be their crimes ever so great. . .

“ was it not so, confessor ?”

“ Yes,” continued Rezzonico, “ were
“ they of the deepest die ! How many
“ have I redeemed in my time, of the
“ highest rank among mankind, from
“ paying the penalty of sin ! from the
“ extreme of corporal suffering and
“ from the eternity of spiritual tor-
“ ment !

“ ment! In many noble families feuds
 “ have arisen, which I have stilled.
 “ The galls of their domestic vipers
 “ have overflowed; they have turned
 “ traitors to their liege lord, and they
 “ have stung the hand upon whose
 “ hospitable hearth they have basked
 “ and crept into existence. Their
 “ masters have, through their slander,
 “ become suspected of crimes.”

“ *Suspected of crimes!*” repeated the
 Count, “ and is there no charity which
 “ covers the crime itself?—the actual
 “ commission, the dread and terrible
 “ perpetration?!”

“ I have said it,” observed Rezzo-
 nico; “ there is no crime too deep—
 “ no sin too red but may be ex-
 “ piated, be it” (continued he, pierc-
 ing the Count with his scrutinizing
 look) “ sacrilege — incest — treason —
 “ robbery—murder!”

“ What was that?” exclaimed the
 Count,

Count, starting fearfully backward,
 “methought I heard a voice cry mur-
 “der!”

“It was my voice, good my lord;
 “I said that even murder may be
 “expiated,” replied the confessor
 calmly.

“No doubt, no doubt, there are
 “some examples of that crime which
 “stand within the limits of God’s
 “pardon; but in the same sin, there
 “are degrees of iniquity limits per-
 “ceptible and definable. From the
 “light crimes repentance washes away
 “down to the deepening shades which
 “end in hell’s lowest gulph—from
 “thence, nor prayers, nor alms—re-
 “pentance, nor even thy preaching
 “and absolution, good father, can re-
 “deem a sinner, lost for aye!”

“Oh, believe it not,” replied Rez-
 zonico, “this is schism, deep heresy
 “against our church! and here with
 “proof

“ proof of holy writ I could solve
 “ your doubts. If we take all the ag-
 “ gravating circumstances of a crime
 “ in its most complicated case—the
 “ crime of murder for instance, as
 “ thus the murder of a”

“ Father?” interrupted the Count with emotion.

“ Let it be so,” cried Rezzonico,
 “ the murder of a father!”

“ By Heaven’s light he echoes me,
 “ and makes a mocking of me!” ex-
 claimed the Count with rage—“ I was
 “ about to say, father, another time I
 “ shall listen to thee.”

“ And touching those moveables of
 “ the Abbey?” observed the con-
 fessor.

“ Another time will I hearken to
 “ your demand, confessor,” cried the
 Count.

Rezzonico bowed meekly and with-
 drew, while the Count, who was quite

exhausted with the events of the day, retired to his chamber.

Count Mörner had spoken to Adolphus on the subject of his adopting the Catholic faith, but he met with a resistance so firm, and at the same time so respectful, that he could not help respecting his son's motives, and admiring those arguments which had been often heretofore urged by himself in the same cause. But the more admirable he found his arguments and the more unshaken his resolution to abide by the Lutheran faith, the greater became the Count's impatience to bend him to his purpose. His son's sentiments were the very same in which he had formerly gloried; but since he had fallen from the lofty independence of mind which had graced the brighter years of his life, and had become the tool of a specious hypocrite, whose tyranny was established from

from the moment that he could make no resistance against the terrors of his own conscience, the Count could not bear to contemplate in his own child the living memento of his disgrace and shame; and with the same violence with which he had once loved and defended, he now hated and reprobated those who dissented from the Church of Rome. He could bear to see his son marked with the faults and foibles which were peculiarly his own, but he could not endure to see him advancing pretensions to form a scale of his own of right and wrong—of religion, justice and civil policy, different from that which he himself chose to set up. As his temper was violent, so were his resolves. The severe measures which he intended to pursue against Adolphus, and the fears which agitated him in consequence of the flight of Herman, strewed his pillow with

bitter meditations, and caused this wretched man to spend a sleepless night.

It was towards the dawning of day, Adolphus was awakened by deep groans, which seemed to proceed from a distant part of his chamber; his watch-lamp had expired, and he could not discern any thing in the obscurity of his apartment. He approached the casement; through the dark and melancholy screen of pines which fenced the château round, he beheld the faint beams of day-break tinging the night with pale and lucid streaks; but the morning was chill and sullen, the clouds lowered dark and heavy, and from their extremities streams of blue light seemed to play like the passing gleams of distant lightnings. In crossing the chamber to return to his bed, Adolphus fell over a man's body which lay extended on the floor, and which

sent

sent forth piteous groans the moment he touched it. Adolphus raised it, and by the increasing light which now gleamed on its countenance, he perceived, with horror, that it was his father whom he held in his arms. He carried the Count to the bed, the warmth of which soon restored him; but the instant he opened his eyes, they glared wildly on Adolphus.—“It is there again!—avaunt, horrible vision!—save me, Heaven!” exclaimed the Count, and dropped once more senseless.

Adolphus was greatly agitated; he feared to leave his father alone, lest he should expire in his absence; and yet he could not otherwise summon his attendants. After many efforts, he at length succeeded in reviving him. “Where am I?” demanded the Count.

“ In the arms of your son,” replied Adolphus.

“ My beloved Adolphus!—ah! yes,
“ I recollect, I sought your chamber—
“ when that terrible spectre! — he
“ pursued me! But, approach, my
“ son, your eyes are darkling, and a
“ mist, obscures your features : let me
“ feel thee, and press something of
“ warmth and of life near my heart—
“ and not that terrible cold hand!”

Adolphus embraced his father, and endeavoured to dispel his fears. He attempted to prove that he was under the influence of one of those terrible and alarming dreams, which are the consequence of weak nerves and irritable habits.

“ Oh! no, my son, it was not one of
“ those dread fancies, peopled with
“ horrid imagery, which when it dis-
“ solves, gives double blessing to the
“ light

“ light of day, and increases the con-
“ scious pleasures of existence. No,
“ no, it was not a dream; it came
“ across me terrible and threatening!
“ with my waking eyes I saw *him* &
“ beneath the lightning of his look
“ powerless I sunk—I felt the chilled
“ atmosphere of an immortal spirit!
“ I beheld his seared wounds: I felt
“ the icy touch of that cold and bloody
“ hand! Adolphus, tell me, can this
“ be a vision? can the quiet of our
“ feeble existence be broken by such
“ dreams as this? can the soul wake
“ and mingle in the enterprises of
“ disembodied spirits? or is it in
“ mockery of our frail and fleshly te-
“ nement, that our mind is food for
“ the sharp and bitter tooth of agony,
“ and suffers under all the corporeal
“ infirmity of pain, while the fragile
“ mould which envelops it lies at

“ rest? Oh! no, Adolphus, this is
“ not to dream. I was aroused by
“ the rushing of immortal pinions, and
“ my chamber was filled with the
“ light of Heaven’s own glory! O
“ God! *he* stood frowning and terrible
“ in his wrath! . . . that vampire spirit
“ settled on me, and seemed to feed
“ on the life’s blood of my heart. It
“ was there, — ’twas in that terrible
“ hour, I struggled with an immortal
“ spirit! . . . but even that could I dare,
“ who would dare all! but I could not
“ abide his look! that look: which is
“ ever present to me! That look
“ blasted me, annihilated me: it re-
“ duced my strength to dust. I would
“ in that moment have changed all my
“ honours for his bloody shroud! A-
“ dolphus, I fled from that terrible
“ spirit! I fled to you for succour,—
“ I fled from him whom the same
“ blessed

“blessed mother bore: for know,
 “Adolphus, it was my brother’s
 “spirit!”

The countenance of Adolphus shewed the terrible emotions of his soul at this dreadful account: the words of comfort came faltering from his tongue, and he looked round him anxiously, as if he dreaded each moment to behold some horrible apparition emerging from the dusky obscurity of the chamber!

“These are but dreams, my father,” rejoined Adolphus, “quietly sleep the dead in their narrow cells.”

“Look now! look now!” exclaimed the Count, interrupting him, “is this a dream, that you cannot behold yon terrible figure? O God! this way he moves!—cover me with mountains! defend me from his presence, all-powerful Heaven!”

The Count fainted in the arms of Adolphus, whose look was fixed on that part of the chamber to which the Count had pointed. It was some few minutes 'ere Adolphus could perceive what the Count's keen fears had instantly detected. A figure, clad in complete steel, stalked across the extremity of the chamber : its proportions and lineaments seemed to be defined by its own exceeding lustre, for the grey light of morning scarcely tinged it. As the figure advanced it shewed its countenance to Adolphus, and his agitation was extreme when he thought he could trace a resemblance in that figure to the Hungarian Jew. The figure made a threatening motion opposite the Count, and then waved to Adolphus, as if he wished to separate them ; but Adolphus, while his eye followed the dread vision, clung closer to the Count, who still murmured wildly

wildly and almost inaudibly words of terror. The Count's groans suddenly ceased, and to the terrified Adolphus it appeared that the heart of his father ceased to beat. He turned his eyes on the Count and beheld a visible change in his features. Shocked and dismayed, he threw his eyes around the room. The figure had disappeared; but his anxiety respecting his father's illness now rose superior to all considerations of the awful circumstance which had occasioned it. He called the attendants by their names with loud cries, and rung out the alarm. The chamber was soon filled with the Count's grooms, who on observing his countenance, remarked that it wore the usual expression which attended the fits to which he was subject. The usual remedies were resorted to, and in a short time he recovered. He opened his eyes languidly, but they were filled with

with pleasure, on recognizing the well-known countenances of those which surrounded him. Adolphus stood beside the couch,* and inquired affectionately how his father felt. “I shall be better anon, kind Adolphus,” replied the Count,—“but see the day appears; my strength returns with it, and I feel my courage mounting once more. I love the light; it revives me; and those honest faces too. Look, Adolphus, behold that beam of gold which pierces the dark imagery of yon casement: come near, brave hearts, and bear me in your arms towards it. It is the blessed sun who rises from our dark wood. Oh God! Oh God! I thank thee, I have seen another day!” , ,

The fresh air of the morning soon revived the Count, and the terrible occurrences of the night were speedily forgotten ;

forgotten. But the evil habits of the Count returned with increasing strength; his penitence and remorse vanished with the gloom which engendered them, and he once more threatened Adolphus with the heaviest weight of his displeasure, if he did not give him an instant token of his obedience, by his recantation of the doctrines of Luther. Adolphus was not to be cajoled or terrified into a dereliction of those principles which were the conviction of his youth; which he had fought and bled for, and which were sealed by the blood of his earliest and his dearest friend the Count de Beaumarchais, to whom, if he did not owe his being, he owed all that in his estimation made existence a blessing—a cultivated mind, pure morals, and unsullied honour. The Count left Adolphus in anger, and was immediately closeted with Rezzonico,

Adolphus

Adolphus went forth to muse on the extraordinary occurrences of the last few hours; and his mind dwelt chiefly on that mysterious apparition, which, by what he gathered from the wild exclamation of his father, proved to be his uncle; and he shrank with horror at the surmise that his father must have imbrued his hands in his brother's blood, from the terror which he expressed at the touch of that cold and bloody hand. Adolphus would often stray from these thoughts to where love and Edda seemed to tempt him. The mystery of her seclusion in that dreary castle of Riddarholmen, together with Montbazon, appeared to him altogether unaccountable. He had no doubt but Montbazon had sought the castle as a place of refuge, but he was afraid to demand of the Count whether he was acquainted with, or could explain this circumstance, lest he should expose

expose his friend to the active hostility of Rezzonico, who, he was convinced, would leave nothing undone to destroy so decided an enemy of his faith. Besides, the Count had always avoided mentioning the name of that hated place, and Adolphus could not well introduce the subject without giving him offence.

Whilst Adolphus walked and mused, the extraordinary appearance of the sky alarmed him. The clouds were rolled together in dark heavy volumes; the wind which had agitated them suddenly ceased, and the gloomy foliage of the pines threw its dark shade upon the ground, unchequered by a single spot of sunny light. Nature appeared to make a pause and stood in terrible stillness. It was an awful moment, and all things seemed to feel it. The animals trembled with fear, and gazed on one another with scared looks.

Wild

Wild things came howling forth from the dark woods, and throwing off their untamed nature approached the dwelling of man and seemed to court his protection. The birds glancing downwards from the heavens flew close to the surface of the earth, and with a feeble cry seemed to search an asylum. Adolphus was filled with dread; he turned back hastily and sought the shelter of Cronberg; but 'ere he reached it, two men on horseback passed him at full gallop." When they saw Adolphus emerging from the wood they wheeled round and rode towards him. He now perceived their helmets, their long beards of peculiar cut, and their red plumes; and he knew them to be soldiers of the king's guard.

"What does this betide?" exclaimed Adolphus aloud.

"Stand;" cried one of the soldiers
lowering

lowering his harquebuss, "we charge
"you in the name of the king."

When Adolphus obeyed this injunction, the soldier demanded if he was Count Magnus Mörner? "No," replied Adolphus, "it is my father's name."
"'Tis him we seek," exclaimed the soldiers, who instantly turned their horses' heads and galloped towards Cronberg.

Adolphus hastened onwards to avoid the fury of the approaching storm. He found the interior of the castle in the utmost confusion. The vassals were running to and fro in wild disorder. The scared hinds were knocking at the gate, bringing their flocks and herds for shelter. The cries of women and children mingled with the war of elements, while the warder from the tower gave signal that here the wandering traveller, if such might hap to be abroad in the evil hour,
would

would find the hospitable board and the protection of a friendly roof.

Amid this universal disorder Rezzonico stalked forth undismayed ; his looks bespoke a gloomy satisfaction, and he might be deemed by an observer the evil genius who raised and exulted in the storm. It was his hour of power,—he was conscious of it, and he enjoyed the triumph which flattered his stern pride. The scoffer of the holy church, and the haughty warrior, trembled when the avenging powers of heaven were abroad. The sneering infidel was smitten with dismay, and the man of mightiest mould shrunk within his panoply of steel. Happy were they who could approach Rezzonico,—who could follow in his path and hang upon his sanctified robe in the evil hour :—for they now gave credit to the miracles which he related to them; and they placed their
trust

trust in him who boasted that he could put to flight the powers of darkness, and who, in his hours of solitary meditation, was wont, they said, to hold communion with his God! The Count was still in conference with the messengers of the King, whose arrival Rezzonico had hailed with unfeigned joy. At a late hour they departed, bearing with them the dispatches which the Count forwarded in answer to the letter he had received from his majesty. No intreaties could prevail on them to pass the night at Cronberg, or even to wait until the violence of the storm had passed away. The Count was sorely disappointed, that his efforts to detain these men had not succeeded, as he was desirous of gaining time, and deemed even a few hours of the utmost importance. The moment these hardy fellows had ventured forth a violent ringing from the Count's

Count's chamber summoned Rezzonico to his presence. When Rezzonico entered the apartment, the looks of the Count evinced great disorder; but he instantly smoothed his brow, and affecting a greater serenity of manner, he bowed lowly to the monk as he approached, and exclaimed, "All hail! to his grace!—the reverend Abbot of St. Bridget's."

"You mock me, my son," replied Rezzonico, "'tis true you have given to me and to those of my order, the ancient Abbey of St. Bridget, which Gustavus suppressed and annexed to your fief; but the Holy Father (if the King indeed permits its re-establishment) will surely find many more deserving of this high honour than the humble man who stands before you."

"You wrong me, confessor, and I would fain convince you that I
" am

“ am not in a jesting humour. Here
 “ is the letter which I have just re-
 “ ceived announcing your appoint-
 “ ment;—you may perceive the su-
 “ perscription bears witness to what I
 “ assert, for it is addressed to the most
 “ reverend father in God, Rezzonico,
 “ Abbot of St. Bridget’s.”

“ It pleases God often to elevate
 “ the lowly and meek of heart, blessed
 “ be his holy name !” aspirated Rez-
 zonico with affected humility ; but his
 eye glanced with an incredulous and
 sneering expression on the Count, for
 he knew full well the Count’s courtesy
 and rising liberality had no other
 source than the danger in which he
 stood and his pressing need of his con-
 fessor’s assistance.

“ Those moveables which formerly
 “ appertained to the Abbey, I have
 “ by this deed of gift transferred to
 “ the order. I have put it out of the
 power

“ power of my heretic son to revoke
 “ this donation. Here are the papers,
 “ read them at your leisure.”

“ Indeed!” exclaimed the monk
 with a look of mock surprise.

“ And now, holy father, to your
 “ private ear I would confide myself
 “ in the pressing emergency which
 “ threatens to overwhelm me. The
 “ traitor Herman has fled to the King,
 “ and accused me of heinous crimes.
 “ Among the rest, of that which if
 “ proved would demand the forfeit of
 “ my life, of murder, foul and unna-
 “ tural ! What was that awful
 “ sound ?”

“ It is the rearing of the storm,
 “ my son,” replied Rezzonico, “ the
 “ wrath of Heaven is abroad !”

“ Approach nearer, good father,
 “ that I may lean upon thee, and whis-
 “ per what no eye’s-dropper should
 “ hear. This Herman accuses me, false-

“ ly

“ ly—he accuses me—think, good fa-
 “ ther, of the murder of a brother!—
 “ Hark! what a dreadful crash, and
 “ now . . . another and another!—Sup-
 “ port me, confessor—Cronberg rocks
 “ in its foundations!”

“ It is a dreadful hurricane,” re-
 plied Rezzonico, evidently alarmed.

“ I was about to observe,” conti-
 nued the Count, “ that in the Abbey
 “ of St. Bridget I might perchance
 “ lie concealed for a time under your
 “ protection, and in St. Bridget’s
 “ sanctuary I might defy the power of
 “ my enemies.”

“ But, my son,” remarked Rezzo-
 nico drily, “ you assert that you are
 “ falsely accused—the innocent should
 “ not fly from wanton accusation.”

“ Even so, holy father, but these
 “ are perilous times, and in our law
 “ the innocent do not always find
 “ protection. His Majesty has sent
 VOL. II. “ me

“ me the depositions of the traitor
“ Herman. I have replied cursorily
“ to each allegation—I have dared
“ to the ordeal of personal combat any
“ accuser who wears the badge of
“ knighthood. Thus far all is favour-
“ able to my cause: but the King’s
“ favour is precarious; should he with-
“ draw it from me and listen to my
“ enemies, I am lost, and with me all
“ those largesses I intended for the
“ church; for by my attainder my
“ grants are forfeit, and the dearest
“ friends I am at present bound to,
“ must be dependant on an heir who
“ owes the church a grudge.”

“ It is most true,” thought Rezzo-
nico.

“ Now, this brother, of whose
“ murder I am accused—falsely ac-
“ cused....”

At this moment a flash of lightning
burst open one of the casements, and
illuminated

illuminated the chamber in which they stood. Several affrighted vassals ran in from the adjoining apartment, whose pale countenances appeared still more ghastly in its blue light. When the stunning noise of the thunderbolt had passed away, Rezzonico ventured to address them, (for the Count seemed to be entirely bereft of the power of speech) and demanded what they wanted? Several voices began to exclaim together, and it was not until after several minutes that Rezzonico could obtain any explanation of their indecorous intrusion. He was at length informed that the lightning had struck the château in several places; the most valuable animals belonging to the Count were destroyed, and several of the domestics who had ventured abroad were blighted on their way, and their black corses might be discerned from the windows of the château. The

wives and children of the vassals, whom fear had collected within the walls of Cronberg, now rent the air with shrieks and lamentations, and invoked the presence of God's minister to command the raging elements to be still! The Count, who was dismayed at this account, now besought the confessor to ~~gratify~~ his people.

"I have often heard," said the Count, "that on the elevation of the Holy Cross, the spirits of darkness gnash their teeth, and fly from it in despair. The wandering ghost is imprisoned in the deep, and no more revisits his midnight haunt. Even the powers of nature cannot prevail against it—the molten fire descending from the volcano's mouth has been arrested in his course; yea, the winds and waves obey it!"

"In sooth, my son," replied Rez-zonico,

zonico, "thy words are just—and...
"great is thy faith."

Rezzonico, well pleased to increase the number of his proselytes, and feeling conscious of the dignity to which this high office elevated him, retired in order to equip himself in his sacred vestments.

Adolphus, who had not been a calm witness of the destruction which surrounded him, had tried in vain to animate the vassals to assist him in quenching the fire. Affrighted and disconsolate they had ceased to oppose it, after a few efforts made in despair. The great hall of Cronberg was filled with groupes of their wives and children; some of whom uttered dismal cries and shrieks of despair, others knelt in prayer, and taught their babes to hold up their little hands, placing their hope in the intercession of innocence and infancy; while all

kept themselves with their faces directed towards the east, that in a position loved of heaven, they might die.

While Adolphus made his way through their ranks, affected with the melancholy spectacle, and determined to effect their safety if possible by his own efforts, he met the terrified warder, who with difficulty had made his escape from his watch, and bore about him the fresh marks of the fire, through which he had descended. He seemed to struggle with some tale, too terrible for utterance; and for a few moments he could only exclaim the words, "Oh! I have seen a dreadful sight!" To the repeated interrogations of Adolphus, he at last replied, that from the summit of his tower, he beheld by the gleams of the lightning, the forest plucked up by the roots, and the surrounding country ploughed
and

and drifting before the winds. "Even
 " now," said he, " it moves this way
 " —the woods of Cronberg are clos-
 " ing round us." Adolphus discred-
 ited this man's miraculous account,
 and resolved to ascend a staircase lead-
 ing to the tower over the great portal,
 which was the only part of the build-
 ing that remained uninjured, in order
 to investigate the truth by his own
 observation. While he quickly as-
 cended he often paused and clasped
 the hand rail, for the tower shook in
 the wind, and the steps trembled be-
 neath his feet. He looked out from a
 loop-hole, and saw that a great part of
 this man's narrative was true. It was
 a dreadful hurricane; clouds of rain
 and hail battered the windows of the
 castle. The gloomy forest clad in its
 wintry shroud, dismantled and dis-
 arrayed, stood like a spectre and trem-
 bled in the storm! Pines and firs

K 4 . . . which

which had borne the buffetings of the tempest for ages, were now torn from their roots, or broken from their aged stems; and the crushing of their trunks as they fell against one another, like reeds before the blast, was awfully sublime.

Disheartened at this sight, Adolphus descended into the great hall of the castle, and while he strove to comfort the afflicted vassals, and pondered on what measures it, best became him to pursue, he was interrupted by the appearance of Rczonico. The confessor stood at the head of the great staircase, followed by several vassals bearing lighted tapers. He was clad in his full vestments, and he was attended by two grooms, one of whom bore a crucifix, and the other the sacred chalice of the host. "Lift up your heads," he exclaimed, "ye that put your faith in the Most High

“ High—for in man ye shall not con-
 “ fide ; but in the name of the All-
 “ powerful ye shall put your trust ! If
 “ there is any one here who does not
 “ acknowledge the power of our holy
 “ religion,” continued Rezzonico,
 glancing at Adolphus, “ let such de-
 “ part ; they mar our holy cere-
 “ mony, and draw down God’s ven-
 “ geance on the innocent.” Adol-
 phus wrapped his cloak closely about
 him, and the gloom in which he now
 stood concealed him from their view.
 “ Throw yourselves upon your knees,”
 exclaimed Rezzonico, elevating the
 cross, “ and bow before the name of
 “ Jesus !” .

The multitude knelt, and bowed
 down before the crucifix. “ Do you
 “ acknowledge yourselves members of
 “ the holy catholic church ?” said
 Rezzonico, “ do you put your faith in
 “ him ?”

“ We acknowledge his holy name,
“ and in him do we put our faith !”
exclaimed the multitude, with one
voice. “ It is enough,” said Rez-
zonico, “ follow me and behold the
“ miracles of your God.”

At this moment the flames which
had been raging in the eastern extre-
mity of the château, communicated to
the body of the building, and filled the
hall with sheets of fire. A dreadful
clap of thunder announced the effects
of a bolt which had fallen on the roof
of the hall. Adolphus extricated him-
self with infinite difficulty, and retreat-
ed from the burning fragments, which
were falling around him in every di-
rection. He gave one look back on that
magnificent château, which was now a
smoking heap of ruins. By the flashes
which the fire now and then emitted,
he could discern the lofty figure of
Rezzonico attended by the kneeling
crowd

crowd of despairing vassals. Men, women, and children might be discerned prostrating themselves, beating their breasts, and making the sign of the cross ; while the confessor standing on the ruins of a broken arch, elevated the host and the crucifix, and from the motion of his lips, Adolphus guessed he was deprecating the wrath of heaven.

Adolphus now bent his faltering steps towards the low tomb of Mehnlos, which was placed in the ancient cemetery of Cronberg, where he intended to pass the night, if even there the storm had spared him a shelter. As he approached it, he heard a sound so shrill and piercing, that his heart was filled with dread. He paused, and listened, and heard again that dismal cry, which was like the shrieking of the prey under howling wolves ! While he again with difficulty groped his way towards

K 6 . the

the entrance of the tomb, a man, in gesture like a maniac, whose bare head was exposed to the pitiless pelting of the elements, passed him at full speed, crying with a loud voice, "Mercy, " mercy, heaven !" His speed seemed to outwing the wind, and the cries of Adolphus did not detain him, for he knew that voice ; and that cry pierced his heart !...It was the voice of his wretched and miserable father !

CHAP. IX.

Vous connaissez le peuple, et savez ce qu'il ose,
 Quand, du ciel outragé pensant venger la cause,
 Les yeux ceints du baudéau de la religion,
 Il a rompu le frein de la soumission.
 — Suivant un faux zèle et l'intérêt pour guides,
 Ne sert un Dieu de paix que par des *homicides* !

LA HENRIADE, ch. 2.

It was through difficulties and dangers that Adolphus moved to the tomb of Mehnlos. The dark yew trees had fallen around it; and when he thrust open the narrow door and descended the steps which led into the cemetery, the night birds who were disturbed in their haunts, fled with shrill screams flapping their wings against him as they passed. The damp and unwholesome vapours of this place, which for many ages had been the cemetery
 .!- where

where the remains of the feudal lords of Cronberg were deposited, struck a death chill to his heart and for some minutes impeded his respiration. The dark vault was lined with mutilated monuments which were obscured by a green and slimy coat, which the damp that trickled from the low arched roof engendered. As Adolphus passed between the line of tombs a low indistinct groan reached his ear. He stopped for a moment and listened, in the pauses of the storm, to try if he could catch that sound again and trace it to its source; but he could hear nothing but the heavy rain which beat against the stone roof. It began to stream through the apertures which time had worn through the building, and Adolphus was forced to proceed onward into the depth of the vault where the roof seemed less damaged. His way was
lighted

lighted but by the momentary flash which illuminated even the dark recesses of this place. As he proceeded however his way became more obscure and uncertain; he thought it unsafe to proceed much farther, fearing lest some yawning vault or chasm might lie in his path, for the ground seemed hollow beneath his feet, and time and the grave's purveyor had burrowed it in many places. He had often heard that beasts of prey in perilous seasons had been driven by famine to prey on the dead; he feared lest one of these should cross his path, and more than once he stood and grasped his sword, when in the dark his imagination pictured to him eyes of fire glaring on him; but in the pause of a moment that flame shot upwards, and to the visionary Adolphus that bright vapour appeared to be the track of some ascending spirit hovering

ing

ing over the frame it loved. He felt around him for some raised slab on which he might pass the remainder of this terrible night. A few steps farther, in a turn of the vault, he was surprised to see a gleam of light issuing from an aperture in the wall. He advanced towards it, treading softly, for he heard men's voices in dispute. He climbed upon a tomb which lay under the place from whence the light issued, and on looking through the aperture, he beheld in a small recess in one of the passages of the cemetery, two men sitting by the embers of a dull and cheerless fire. On their heads they wore caps of iron; but the rust which encrusted them became banditti rather than soldiers. From beneath their cloaks of white fur their studded cuirass was visible, and when they turned round he saw that their mantles were marked by an immense white cross.

cross. They had taken their swords out of their broad belts, and with their points they stirred up the embers which were near expiring. Their harquebusses lay against the wall at some distance; and while they idly chatted, they applied themselves frequently to their flasks of brandy. Their faces were disfigured with scars, and they wore their thick and dark matted beards low upon their breasts. The countenances of these men appeared to Adolphus to be strikingly savage and ferocious; and with intense interest and anxiety he listened to the following conversation.—

Ulf sax. Hark! there's another!

Hoffler. That clap of thunder is enough, good faith, to wake these sleepers!

Ulf sax. I've been a-top o'the Alps, and heard the thunder of the falling avalanche: I have sailed in the midnight storm which Lapland witches
• raised;

raised ; I have waded through rivers of blood ; I have seen dreadful sights ! but such a night as this is far more terrible !

Hoffler. An it were the day of judgment, Ufsax ? They say strange things, ay, passing terrible, will arouse us in the twilight of that awful morn ! Who shall abide the coming of the King of Glory ? where shall we hide our heads ? we...men of blood !

Ufsax. Go to, go to ; this is priest's folly—such fears ill become a soldier. When I can't smell blood, I must drink. Let the storm rage an it will as long as there is brandy in my horn.

Hoffler. Thou art an unbeliever, and not fitted to become a soldier in Christ's warfare.

Ufsax. Ay, thou would'st have crucified him too, an he had a monk's cowl on !—Hush ! something stirs near us !

Hoffler. It is the passing wind—or
perchance

perchance an affrighted bat scared by thy blasphemy.

Ulsax. I hear the tread of distant feet : my ear long used to listen on the watch, can tell how far the distant foeman lurks : this was no friendly foot.

Hoffler. S'blood it is our chief. Already Tigerhielm stays beyond his hour : and abroad in such weather as this ! But they say the elements cannot prevail against him : the wind passes him without rustling the folds of his garment, and the lightning never singes an hair of his head ; his body casts no shadow in the sun : he is a fearful being ! I should not wonder, if by the power of his art he had raised this storm !

Ulsax. Here's his health ; spirit or no spirit he has a brave heart. The sounds are gone.

Hoffler. Out and fetch some boughs
for

for our fire : it dies away, and the night is cold.

Ulsax. List ! there is another strange sound ! I would not face the horrors of this night at such an hour for worlds : besides, I hate the smell of fresh green boughs. Go thyself, Hoffler.

Hoffler. Ha ! ha ! do these fears become a soldier ?

Ulsax. Listen !

Hoffler. It this way comes !

Ulsax now rose up and seized his harquebuss, moving on his hands and feet, towards that part of the cemetery from whence the sound came. Adolphus who heard a rustling sound behind one of the tombs opposite to him, watched their movements with great anxiety. Ulsax dragged from behind the tomb a trembling boy, who threw himself on his knees and begged for mercy.

Ulsax.

Ulsax. Ha! dost thou listen? I'll cut off thy ears for thee!

Boy. (*On his knees*) Mercy! good warriors, mercy!

Hoffler. What didst thou hear, wretch?

Boy. Nought but the distant thunder rolling, the owl screaming, and the roaring of the wind.

Ulsax. Ha! and didst thou not fear?

Boy. Fear; what is that? I do not understand you.

Hoffler. Brave youth! do you not tremble now? Art thou not afraid of us?

Boy. Yes! I tremble! your dark looks are terrible!—but what should I fear being alone? God is good, but man is wicked.

Ulsax. Prating urchin, I will put you to the proof: go to the mouth of the vault, and pluck me some of the
• • branches

branches which there lie scattered, to mend our fire. If you flinch a jot, and do not perform my bidding—by the cross, I'll scalp thee, and scatter thy limbs to the raven; even though thy mother held thee. Go, boy, and see that you bring the driest boughs.

Boy. Good masters, I obey willingly.

The boy now groped his way to the entrance of the 'vault, while Hoffer sat down beside the embers, and Ulf-sax listened, in order to detect the boy, if he attempted to escape. Adolphus, who observed the lynx-eyes of Ulf-sax roving in every direction, scarcely breathed, lest this ruffian should catch the sound, and in this critical pause he dreaded lest the child's fears should tempt him to escape, and from the awful warning of Ulf-sax, he had no doubt but that the attempt would lead to his immediate death.

death. He felt almost a pleasure, when he beheld the boy returning in a few minutes with his arms filled with boughs.

Ulsax. Throw them on the embers ; now kneel and blow them with your breath ; I freeze, I freeze ; my horn is emptied. Hoffer give me some brandy for charity.

Hoffer. Thou art mischievous in your drink, comrade ; but an you will drink sparingly there is my horn—ah ! the fire blazes to the roof. Sit down, boy. Why you still tremble ! what's thy name ?

Boy, Eric.

Hoffer. Eric ! that's a good name ; but Eric, what—hast thou no father ?

Boy. (Sighs) I never heard my father's name.

Ulsax. Ha ! ha ! thou art some imp of vice—some shred of quality, I warrant. Thy father's reproach, and thy mother's

mother's shame : one that will die unwept, unhonoured, and unhallowed. Thou shalt have a nameless grave. Wilt thou go to heaven, bastard ? By the saints, it would be a charity to send thee thither. (*Drinks*)

Boy. (*Weeps.*)

Hoffler. Down on your knees, and pray to Ulsax to be kind.

Boy. Thou wilt not kill me !

Ulsax. Ay ! pray ! for thou hast not long to live.

Hoffler. Let the boy live, he cannot harm us.

Ulsax. He has heard that which may bring us into peril—the dead tell no tales—come down and prepare.

Boy. Mercy ! mercy !

Alolphus seeing the sanguinary Ulsax about to perform his cruel purpose, instantly quitted his place of concealment and rushed into the recess, determined to rescue the boy, or perish with

with him; he came behind Ulf sax unawares, and snatched the drawn sword, which he held over the head of the trembling boy, out of his hand. Hoffer instantly started up in consternation at the sight of an armed stranger, drew forth his sword and briskly attacked Adolphus. Their swords now clashed fearfully in the air, but they soon closed on one another; and while they struggled, with various advantage, Ulf sax, who had seized his harquebuss, marched round them, endeavouring to procure a secure and steady aim at the heart of Adolphus, without endangering the life of his comrade. At the moment that Adolphus, pressed by such fearful odds, lay almost breathless and overpowered in the deadly embrace of Hoffer, a voice was heard to issue from an aperture in the roof of the cemetery, and the word "*forbear!*"

caused Hoffer instantly to relinquish his hold of Adolphus. Ulf sax, with his harquebuss still cocked, and seemingly unwilling to spare his victim, threw his blood-shot eye anxiously upwards on the aperture, in hopes his ears deceived him, and not willing to believe that it was the order of that dread chief, whose commands, at whatever risk, they were always fain to obey! 'Eré the command was repeated, a female, bearing a torch in her hand, rushed into the vault, whom Adolphus immediately recognized.—It was Christina, Olof's daughter. When she saw the ruffians recover from their surprise, and about to renew the contest, she threw herself between them, and exclaimed:—"Forbear, rash men, " I command you, in the name of " your dread chief, in the name of " Tigerhielm, forbear!"

" Was thine that voice," cried Ulf sax,

Ulf sax, grasping the boy, and holding his harquebuss cocked against his head, "which 'ere while summoned us from above? speak, 'ere I blow this ur-chin's brains out?"

"Oh God! what do I see," exclaimed Christina frantically, "it is he, it is my Eric! forbear!"

She threw herself on the boy, and at the same moment a voice from the aperture cried "*forbear?*" The two ruffians stood aghast!

"It is but the echo of those vaults," exclaimed Ulf sax.

"It is the voice of our chief," cried Hoffer.

"He that sheds blood below, shall answer it with his own. I charge you to meet me instantly at the mouth of the cemetery."

At the sound of that dreadful voice, the ruffians seized their arms, and Adolphus saw them depart with un-

L 2. . . feigned

feigned joy, and unbounded gratitude to Providence for the unexpected preservation of his life. He knelt beside Christina, who had fainted from the excess of her emotion; the boy kissed her white arm, and concealed his sobs and tears in her bosom, while Adolphus stuck the torch on high and fanned Christina with his cloak, who began now gradually to recover. "Is he alive?" she exclaimed, throwing her eyes wildly round her; and then feeling Eric's warm tears falling on her neck, she clasped him in her arms.

"And who is Eric?" demanded Adolphus, while he gazed on the confused Christina, who answered with maternal pride struggling with her blushes, "He is my child—my beloved child!"

Adolphus felt the propriety of resting satisfied with the information which

which she chose to give him, and he put no more questions to Christina respecting the boy. Christina was now recovered, and when she was informed of what had occurred to the boy, she thanked Adolphus in the warmest terms for having saved her son's life at the risk of his own. Adolphus interrupted her by observing that to her interference must be attributed the safety of both ; yet he could hardly forbear to express his astonishment at finding the gentle Christina in some degree implicated in the secrets of banditti.

“ They are not what they seem,” she replied ; “ but ask not, inquire not. I am bound by an oath, a dreadful oath, not to reveal what I know concerning them. My purpose here had no reference to them, and their concealment in

“ these vaults was e^tcn unknown to
“ me.”

A deep groan proceeding from the bowels of the earth now startled them. Adolphus recollected the sound was the same which he had heard on his entering the cemetery. His looks expressed the horror he felt, and his eyes seemed to demand of Christina, if she could explain this supernatural visitation.

“ Alas ! poor melancholy mourner ! ” exclaimed Christina, “ thy night of penance is nearly over—thy horrid task is done.—Follow me, ” said she, turning to Adolphus, “ and you shall see the cause.”

Christina led the way, while the boy lit her steps with the torch, and Adolphus followed in silence. They stopped before a sarcophagus of black marble, on which the name of Mehnlos, without any title or addition, was inscribed.

inscribed. Christina threw open a small door in the side of the monument, which disclosed a flight of steps that led into a little vault, whose gloom was relieved only by one wretched watch-light. There was barely sufficient light to discern a coffin which had been raised from a new made grave, and a female cloathed in deep mourning who lay extended on the cold earth by its side. Christina descended into the vault, and when the light of the torch she carried flashed on the face of the female, Adolphus sunk against the tomb overpowered by his emotion, exclaiming,

“ Powers of heaven ! it is my mother !
 “ to meet her thus in grief, and per-
 “ haps derangement of mind, and be-
 “ fore the once living image of her
 “ sin and dishonour ; ’tis too much
 “ for the feelings of a child to bear !”

Christina raised up the Countess,

L 4 . . . who

who suffered herself to be led passively away ; but 'ere she reached the steps, 'she stopped, and exclaimed to Christina, " I have not yet heard
 " the cock crow, nor the birds sing—
 " it is not morning ?"

" Dear lady," replied Christina,
 " the hour of penance is past ; I beseech you quit this melancholy
 " sight."

The Countess turned once more to the coffin which contained the remains of Mehnlos, and gazed with unutterable affection upon it. " Christina," she exclaimed wildly, " my son is not
 " dead—this is mere mockery of life
 " —they told me, I should find him
 " heré—but these ashy lips, whiter
 " than his white shroud—where is the
 " rose's hue that once flushed them ?
 " He has promised me to return—I
 " have seen him dancing on the green
 " billow, with his dark hair waving
 " in

“ in the sun. I have heard his voice
“ in the storm, and ever and anon it
“ whispered, ‘*Eleonora, Eleonora,*
“ *dear mother, I come !*”

“ In sooth, good lady,” exclaimed Christina, who was alarmed to see the increasing derangement of the Countess, “ it is not fitting that we
“ should stay longer here, for the
“ Count. . . .”

“ Ha !” cried the Countess in dismay, “ is the Count coming ? let me
“ take a last look of this faint image
“ of my child.”

The Countess leaned over the body, and pressed her hands in agony against her forehead. Christina removed her gently from this dreadful sight, and guided her up the steps of the vault. They proceeded along the dark row of tombs to the mouth of the cemetery. The sun was rising in the east, and Adolphus, who had sought the bracing

air of morning, now stood at the door of the cemetery. The Countess, who viewed him in that rose light, imagined she beheld a vision of the Count his father, and she exclaimed to the astonished Adolphus, who had bent his knee and kissed her hand : “ Away !
“ horrible illusion !—’twas thus you
“ came a wooing, and drove me mad
“ —where are your children ? have
“ you murdered them all ? I did not
“ think that one so fairly formed could
“ do so base an act. Away ! for thou
“ art cursed of God for ever and
“ ever !”

Adolphus and Christina sought to undeceive her ; and her son, with every care, endeavoured to dispel the fatal impression which his likeness to his father had created on her mind ; but vain were their efforts. It was on this point that her disordered fancy now rested, and she wept and lamented

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ed the loss of Mehnlos, of whose death she was now conscious, and she reproached Adolphus, whom she accused of sending Mehnlos to his early grave. Adolphus, who beheld with infinite sorrow the pain his presence created, left the Countess in the care of Christina, who informed him that she came to convey the Countess to Laurentius, who was in waiting at no great distance to receive his patient.

Adolphus proceeded in search of his vassals and attendants ; but those who had escaped from the dangers of the storm were scattered through the country, and he found it impossible to collect them, or to gain any intelligence of his father. The sun rose in beauty over this scene of desolation. The once smiling prospects of Cronberg were changed into the awful wreck which nature might be supposed to exhibit in the last throes of her convulsion.

The soul of Adolphus was moved with horror at this sight, and to his contemplative mind it appeared that the hand of Providence itself had pointed to the guilty towers of Cronberg, and the ministers of his wrath had executed his dread bidding when the measure of iniquity was full. It was extremely improbable that the Count his father had survived the dangers of the night. Although he had escaped from being buried in the ruins of the château, yet the hazards he would be exposed to in the open country, might have proved more fatal.

Adolphus wandered through the torn-up forests. In many places the lightning had struck the pines, and the fire having spread from tree to tree, their scorched and blasted remains exhibited for many a mile the fiery path of the Angel who smote them on that terrible night. He turned up the
unburied

unburied corse which lay around him : many of their faces were unknown to him ; others recalled to his mind the many marks of fidelity and attachment he had received from them ; and giving to their melancholy fate a sigh and to their memory a tear, he turned his countenance from the land which lay under the displeasure of Heaven. His hopes were raised in consequence of his not finding the body of his father among the slain, and he shaped his course towards Riddarholmen, as the only place of refuge which remained to him. He had every reason to believe that it had become the haunt of banditti ; but as he now would have the power of commanding there in the name of his father, he was resolved to dislodge the villains who had taken possession of the castle, and he determined to spend there the remainder of his miserable existence. His first
• • intention

and spots of silver which mark the divisions and highest elevations of the lunar world. The stars burned with a thousand fires of different colours, and when he turned to the north pole, the brilliant flashes of the aurora borealis streamed from that point, and was tinged with all the vivid hues of the rainbow. It assumed the most fantastic forms ; rising like a ball of fire, or shooting its diverging rays across the heavens, which it embraced with an embroidery of ever-changing light. Portentous shapes and spirits of gigantic stature might be traced by the curious eye, riding in that northern light.

Bitter and agonising, however, were the reflections of Adolphus as he gazed upon the stars. " Oh ! Providence," he exclaimed, " if there I could read my fate ! " The recollection of those happy days he enjoyed
in

in the society of Edda, proved to him now a source of exquisite consolation. But the question which his heart whispered, "does she love me still? does she still preserve any recollection of a miserable wanderer? Ah! no!" thought the wretched Adolphus, "the world claims her—to me she is lost for ever." He now became uneasy at the thoughts of spending the night in that dismal and gloomy wood, when as he cast an anxious look around him, he descried through an opening in the foliage a small gothic door, which was in the lower story of a building of very considerable extent. Finding he could not force open this door, he walked to the opposite side of the building. There was an open area here between the trees, but it was nearly full of the massy fragments which had fallen from the walls. On looking up he beheld a venerable ruin, mouldering beneath the

the hand of time. It was built in the gothic style of architecture, and in former times had been dedicated to the memory of the Virgin. St. Bridget was the first Abbess, and on her canonization after her death, clouds of pilgrims came from the surrounding countries, prostrating themselves before her tomb, and embracing with fervor the relics of the departed saint. After Gustavus Vasa protested against the Catholic faith, the miracles performed by the monks in the name of St. Bridget had ceased ; but her shrine still continued to be frequented by the most ignorant and superstitious of the peasantry, whose prejudices in favour of the religion whose worship he had abolished, were conciliated by the acute mind of Gustavus, who allowed the splendid ritual, meretricious ornaments, and sumptuous vestments of the catholic, to cling round the chastity

tity of the Lutheran altars. The misfortunes which had nearly effected the downfall of the Mörner family, had extended their fatal influence to the shrine of the saint; and the once magnificent sanctuary which had afforded a splendid revenue to the abbey and adjoining monastery, now scarcely afforded shelter to the owls and bats who clustered in its lofty roof; or guarded from the cold wind of heaven only...the bones of the dead who reposed beneath it. Adolphus could not move his eye from the beauty of its clustered pillars, as they rose in all the harmony of just proportion, proping the dark and broken arches, which relieved, but did not break the masses of this fane. Dark evergreen foliage mantled round the buttresses, and the weeds and spreading herbs which had rooted themselves in the crevices were now covered with snow.

and glittered like trees of silver in the light of the moon.

The chimes of a neighbouring clock now told three quarters to ten. Adolphus turned to the side from whence the sound proceeded, and started when he beheld the many spires of Riddarholmen rising above the trees at no great distance. To be so near this fatal spot at such an hour struck him with alarm: he dreaded that he might encounter some of the banditti in his way to the turret of Olaus, and he therefore gave up the idea of visiting the castle until morning.

Adolphus entered the ruins of the abbey, and looked around him for some dry cell, where he might rest his weary limbs. He wandered through the ruins of the cloisters, and when he entered the aisle of the chapel, a melancholy scene of desolation opened to his view. Massy fragments of its
once

once richly fretted roof had fallen on the ground, and obstructed his way; the richly carved seats of the clergy had crumbled beneath the touch of time, and their shattered remains now strewed the area of the choir. The effigies of saints—the sculpture rich in the history of past times—the faded and tattered banners of the brave—the speaking scrolls that told of the virtues of those who slept beneath them—and the wings of the hymning cherubim—all were scattered and fallen from their high station, and declared in the expressive language which speaketh to the heart, that such is the history of man and of his works! Adolphus made his way through these ruins to the altar. At one side of the chancel rose the gigantic statue of St. Bridget from an elevated pedestal. It was formed of wood, which had formerly, no doubt, been gilt and splendidly adorned,

adorned, but so rough was the execution of this figure, that it appeared to Adolphus to have been the effort of an infant art—a relic of rude and barbarous times. The weather had completely stripped it of its coating—the limbs were mutilated, the face ~~was~~ deprived of its prominent features, and the bleached and withered appearance of the wood gave it a ghastly and hideous appearance as it stood erect and threatening in the moonlight. Adolphus stumbled over a hard lump as he crossed to the opposite side of the altar to examine a tomb which had attracted his attention. On taking it up, he perceived that it was a human skull, and he sighed to think that it might be the remains of one of his own ancestors. The tomb was composed of porphyry, and enriched with gilt ornaments, surmounted with a coronet. It was marked with this simple inscription,

tion, “ *Sacred to the Memory of Arvedina!*” Adolphus gazed with respectful awe on this slab, which covered all that remained of the once lovely and unfortunate Arvedina. The scattered remains of mortality which surrounded him suggested many melancholy reflections. He withdrew himself from this scene and seated himself on the pedestal of a pillar which had tumbled from its base. The quick moving of a shadow on the white marble pavement startled him, and looking round he beheld a figure flit by him, whose appearance was wild and savage in the extreme. Adolphus sate in the shadow of the screen which guarded the pale of the altar, and therefore was completely concealed from the figure, which he observed now at his leisure. It was a man who resembled in his stature one of the ruffians whom he had encountered in the cemetery

metry of Cronberg ; but he could not distinguish his features, for the vizor which was fastened to his morion was drawn over his face. / He was armed with an harquebuss, and he looked round him anxiously as he passed close to the screen behind which Adolphus lay concealed.

Adolphus instantly quitted his exposed situation, and while he cautiously advanced into the darker shades of the interior of the abbey, he lost sight of this man, who had disappeared in one of the adjoining aisles. Adolphus ascended a little staircase which led to a small row of niches, elevated upon an arcade, which crossed the choir. They were sufficiently elevated above the aisle to prevent Adolphus being exposed to the observation of any casual intruder ; and if these ruins were also the haunt of banditti, he knew not where he could be more effectually

fectually concealed from their view. From his elevated situation he commanded a perfect view of the interior of the chapel: opposite to him stood the statue of St. Bridget, surrounded by the tombs of his ancestors, and beyond them the gloomy aisles and the delapidated cloisters of the abbey branched off into dark and distant perspective.

The unhappy Adolpnus had now food for musing even to madness, and various and complicated were the images of evil, which a dark and melancholy imagination conjured up to his view. But he struggled against these wild shapings of a disturbed fancy; looking up towards heaven, he beheld, through an opening in the roof, millions of stars blazing over his head, the suns of countless worlds; his mind was now naturally directed to the great Being who dwells beyond
VOL. II. M them;

them; the great spirit, whose word created the beautiful lights of heaven; who spanned the blue arch, and gave to the celestial spheres their motions. Adolphus was struck with the awful reflection, that he stood now in the presence of that Being, and insignificant as he was, his actions were visible to his eye, and his thoughts were weighed in the eternal balance. But the mind of Adolphus was filled with consolation by this thought; he was innocent himself of those crimes which call down the vengeance of heaven, and he submitted to those trials which Providence chose to inflict on him, with the fortitude of a manly heart, and the resignation of a devout one.

He spread his pelisse upon the floor, which was composed of fragments of stone; the surface of which, the feet of monks, or perhaps the knees of penitents had worn to a glassy smoothness.

ness. Fatigue, however, had given a charm to his rocky couch ; and he was about to ^{*}repose, when a noise in the body of the chapel caused him to start from his slumber and quit his cell. The sound proceeded from the gigantic statue of St. Bridget. The monstrous lips of the image began to move, and the body of the chaste saint, seemed to be suddenly filled with life.

Adolphus, astonished at this prodigy, feared that late events had disordered his brain, or that a dream deceived him. He roused himself and advanced nearer to the chancel ; he now perceived that the statue was really in motion. While he attentively watched it, the head of St. Bridget suddenly disappeared, and the head of an armed warrior, surmounted by a white plume, rose in its place. The mantle of the warrior was covered with a large white cross, a device
 M 2 which

which he now recollected he had also observed on the cloaks of the assassins whom he had discovered in the cemetery, the fatal symbol of his enemies, the White Cross Knights ! The knight looked round the chancel for a few minutes, and finding all was still, he emerged from the trunk of the statue, and the head of St. Bridget instantly resumed its place.

The knight proceeded through the chancel towards the cloisters, and Adolphus perceived that he stopped before an arched door which opened into one of the cells. The stranger struck on the door thrice with his sword, when it was opened by a Monk, who, taking the knight by the hand, led him within the cell and closed the door. Adolphus looked again towards the statue, when he perceived the head of St. Bridget had again disappeared and given place to the countenance of a young

young woman, who seemed to be watching the steps of that armed knight with intense anxiety. When the monk closed the door, she emerged from the statue, and Adolphus instantly recognized Christina. She placed herself in the shade of the chancel, from whence she could see every thing that passed in the body of the chapel, without running the risk of discovery. Adolphus determined instantly to descend and join her, but ere he had time to execute his purpose the knight returned from the monk's cell.

Adolphus felt that he was now in imminent danger of detection, as the least motion would move his shadow which lay across that warrior's way. He beheld two figures advancing on tiptoe from the interior of the Abbey: one of them was considerably advanced before the other; his right hand was fixed on the hilt of a dagger which he

M 3

carried

carried beneath his cloak, and he stole after the knight with cautious and weary steps. When the second figure advanced a little nearer, Adolphus immediately recognized the ruffian, whom he had seen in the interior of the abbey. This man measured his steps exactly in the same proportion as the first, and with a savage and an eager eye he seemed already to devour his prey. The sensations which Adolphus felt at this scene, were such as hardly allowed him to breathe, and he drew forth his dagger in order to defend himself in case he should be discovered. The man with the poignard now uplifted his arm in order to bury his steel in the knight's heart; the glittering point was already descending on its victim, when the savage, who followed him, instantly shot him with his harquebuss; he uttered a cry as he fell, and Adolphus knew it to be the

the

the voice of Carl. Christina rushed forward at the well known sound, and fainted near the body of her brother; while the knight, turning round, encountered, as he imagined, another assassin in Adolphus, whom his eye had detected behind the screen of the chancel.

The knight with whom Adolphus now contended, was Wildebrand himself, who triumphantly announced himself when he sprung upon Adolphus; but the unequal contest between Adolphus and Wildebrand, who was fully equipped for combat, was soon decided; for the harquebussier blew a shrill horn, which soon assembled several armed men, who wore the badge of the White Cross. Adolphus was thrown upon the ground, and completely overpowered by superior numbers. Wildebrand ordered the eyes of Adolphus to be covered

with a bandage, and then, in a voice of thunder, he commanded them to bear their prisoner before him to the subterraneous prisons of the cloister.

CHAP. X.

* Dans les jours périlleux,
 La superstition enflamme sa furie ;
 Il croit par *terreur* ramener les succès.

CHARLEMAGNE, *par Prince Lucien-Bonaparte.*

WHILE those events were passing, which we have endeavoured to describe in the foregoing chapters, which so remarkably affected the happiness and threatened even the life of Adolphus, circumstances of some moment had occurred to Montbazon, which it is now necessary to relate. Shortly after his arrival at the castle of Riddarholmen, he summoned the leading chiefs of that party to whose interests he had devoted himself; he laid before them the several plans he had matured, for

the purpose of effecting with certainty and without risk the object they had in view, and he desired that each member would carefully consider them 'ere they bound themselves by that vow of fidelity which was necessary to give confidence to their chief.

John III. who at this time reigned in Sweden, had passed several years of his youth in the solitary confinement of a den only a few feet square. When the excesses of his brother Eric XIV. caused him to be dethroned, John was elevated from his prison to the throne, and he retaliated on the deposed monarch the same barbarous punishment which Eric had inflicted on himself. But in the school of adversity, John had not learned prudence or wisdom, and the attempt which he made to introduce the religion of the Church of Rome, proved singularly odious to the majority of his

his subjects. To prevent the execution of this design, and even to dethrone the monarch if he persisted in this outrage on the established laws of the realm, was the secret object of Montbazon and his associates. They assembled in the neglected ruins of Riddarholmen, and some advantages which they quickly discovered in this place, caused it to be singularly well adapted to their purpose. They erected the sacred banner of the *White Cross*, as declaratory of their holy warfare, and they assumed on their dress the chaste emblem, as typical of the spotless life of its founder, and expressive of the purity of the doctrines they professed and of their resistance to the errors,—the pomps and vanities—and the meretricious pageantry of the Church of Rome. Montbazon, when they assembled to take the dreadful oath which bound them together,

dwelt on the necessity of unanimity, caution, and secrecy, and on the expediency of delaying the moment of decisive action until their measures were sufficiently ripe for execution. The majority of the knights of the White Cross consisted of hot-headed enthusiasts and religious visionaries, whose sanguine expectations were considerably damped by the prudent caution which governed Montbazon in his resolves. He had learned from experience the necessity for extreme coolness and calculation ere so extensive an enterprize was commenced, and his increasing years might have given to his manner a solemnity not calculated to meet the aspiring hopes of the young and imprudent, nor to give encouragement to those hot spirits who were eager to rush into the cannon's mouth. The White Cross Knights wished and hoped to find in
their

their promised leader something miraculous and overpowering—a mind that would dazzle and confound—a frame that might defy the elements—a good fortune, which might spring from his presiding star—and the aid of those unknown and hidden powers, which they were willing to ascribe to that philosopher who had penetrated so deeply into the mysteries of nature. Such were their vain imaginings and such the nature of those hopes which the staid and simple appearance of Montbazon so speedily dissipated. The usual difference of opinion, selfish views and rash resolves prevailed in the councils of the conspirators, and they were not, like the celebrated triumvirate, ready to sacrifice their mutual friends to the spirit of concord, although the lives of some of their near relatives were demanded as necessary victims from the active part they

they had taken in assisting John III. in his designs. The knights had secretly collected those vassals on whom they could depend in the castle of Riddarholmen; but their numbers were too few to enable them to take the field; money, the sinew of war, was wanting, and such was the exhausted and distracted state of the country, that they found it even difficult to procure the supplies which were necessary for the few troops they had collected. The White Cross Knights were obliged therefore to spend their time in inglorious idleness, and by night they sometimes stole out like banditti to pillage the surrounding country, or they took a mean revenge in burning the castles of their foes, the Catholic Barons, whom they did not dare to meet in the field. The winter set in with all its accustomed severity. The troops clamoured for money and food.

Montbazon

Montbazon read a reproach in every eye, and he was certain that his disgrace was not far distant. He panted in such an emergency for an honourable death; but whither could he lead his mutinous troops? If he headed them in the open field, the King's troops were too numerous to allow a man of them to escape. To lead them out by night,—to lurk in holes and corners, was a dishonourable thought that his soul disdained. Too many of such excesses had occurred, and so diminished was the power of his authority, that he found it utterly impossible to restrain these outrages. Subordination was at an end—mutiny, open and daring mutiny raged in Riddarholmen, and the evil was at its height. Montbazon was in despair, and it was only the thought of Edda which prevented the commission of some desperate action. Montbazon had

had placed Edda in a part of the castle adjoining the turret of Olaus. As this situation was very remote from those apartments to which the White Cross Knights had access, her residence in Riddarholmen was unknown to them. At stated times, Montbazon would pass some time in her retreat, and these visits proved to him now his only consolation. It was proposed at the next council that Montbazon should resign his command ; and that hero, with anguish in his heart, was obliged to yield to the humiliating necessity of his evil fortune. He declared, however, to the knights, that he should still regard himself as a member of their confederacy, and he hoped that under a more fortunate leader, he might witness the successful termination of their plans, or find a fellow grave beside them in honourable death. This sentiment was received with great applause,

plause, and Montbazon retired deeply affected. After a long pause, during which the knights were affected with various emotions, there arose a murmur among them, and they cavilled with one another, demanding who should be their new leader.

Baron Kruzen, who might be deemed one of the most courageous and intrepid among them, and who was also remarkable for an acute and penetrating mind, now rose with great solemnity, and begged leave to propose for their consideration, a knight whom he pledged himself would never be found wanting in their utmost need.

All the knights now spoke together, and demanded "what man is this?" "and where does he abide?"

"He is everywhere to be found," replied the Baron; "he is mighty
"and irresistible; he is above us and
"below

“ below us : he perhaps sits among
“ us at this moment ! ”

All the White Cross Knights gave an exclamation of surprise. The Baron stopped for a few moments : his agitation was so great, he could with difficulty proceed.

“ Hear me, Knights of the White
“ Cross,” exclaimed the Baron ; “ at
“ this secret hour of midnight, I have
“ a tale to unfold which almost sur-
“ passes belief!...but who ever doubted
“ of my courage, or my word ? there
“ lies my gauntlet for him who would
“ gainsay me. Pardon me, knights !
“ we are brethren !—but the recol-
“ lection of this man ‘ shakes me
“ with fear, and disorders my mind !
“ I am no green enthusiast ; but we
“ knew that the dead have been rais-
“ ed, and the spirits of the departed
“ have walked with frail and sinful
“ mortality ! yea, upon the earth hath
“ the

“ the angel of the Lord descended,
“ and smote with a sword of fire the
“ enemies of the true religion ! These
“ things have come to pass in old
“ time. But when has the true faith
“ endured greater perils than in these
“ days ? Who would say that a pro-
“ phet may not arise, and dissipate
“ the darkness of a barbarous age ? I
“ feel even now the indications of an
“ approaching spirit : it encourages
“ me to proceed, and it summons me
“ to a dreadful reckoning, if I fail to
“ obey the commands which are laid
“ upon me.”

The knights looked on one another in silence, and then on the Baron, who continued in a low and fearful tone of voice. “ It was at midnight this
“ dread being appeared to me. It
“ bade me announce to you, that for
“ him was reserved the sword of vic-
“ tory. He foretold that you should
“ elect

“ elect him your leader ; yea, even
“ this night should he stand in the
“ midst of you !

“ This night !!! ” exclaimed all the
knights.

“ Even so ! I despised the injunc-
“ tions of my mysterious visitor. It
“ appeared to me thrice—and twice
“ it came in anger : but now for the
“ repose of my soul I have performed
“ his bidding. I therefore propose to
“ you, Tigerhielm Count of Ravens-
“ wold, of Hungary !—elect him your
“ chief.”

All the knights, who were deeply
penetrated with awe during the recital,
now cried out with one voice, “ we
“ elect Tigerhielm, Count of Ravens-
“ wold, commander of the White
“ Cross Knights ! ”

The Baron now sat down, exclaim-
ing, “ it is well done : now let him
“ appear ! ”

“ Appear !

“ *Appear ! appear !* ” exclaimed all the knights.

* The doors of the vault in which they held their midnight sitting, were suddenly thrown open and a figure appeared in the midst of them, of gigantic stature. His face was disfigured with scars, and the lower part of it concealed by a dark and flowing beard ; his eyes were animated by a severe expression, which caused a powerful sensation in those who beheld him. His form was nearly enveloped by a robe of white fur, on which the white cross was embroidered in silver ; his head, and the upper part of his face was covered with a helmet of solid gold, on the front of which was placed the eyes, scalp, and fangs of a tiger. From the top of his casque sprung a flickering flame of blue light, which tinged his features as he moved, and

and gave them a peculiar ghastly expression !

At the appearance of this strange being, the knights rose in disorder, and grasped their swords.

“ Who summoned Tigerhielm, Count of Ravenswold ? ” exclaimed the stranger.

“ Art thou not a spirit ? ” cried one of the knights fearfully.

“ I am flesh and blood,” replied the stranger, “ put forth your hands and feel me.”

The knights were convinced that he spoke the truth.

“ Who are ye whose summons I have obeyed ? ” demanded Tigerhielm.

“ We are free brethren of the true faith, knights of the holy cross,” exclaimed the knights, “ and we have elected you our chief.”

“ Was

“ Was it for this I was summoned
“ from Hungary?” said Tigerhielm
gravely, “ Well, let be it so, I must
“ respect the tenure by which I hold
“ my life.”

“ From Hungary, even now?” demanded one of the knights with terror.

“ No, Sir Knight, it is a year since
“ I was summoned on this mission—
“ and all that time have I been travelling
“ hither!”

“ This is passing strange,” exclaimed one of the knights.

“ Doth it exceed the power of
“ God?” demanded Tigerhielm contemptuously.

The knight replied in the negative, and then turning to the knight who sat beside him, he whispered, “ On
“ my soul, this man speaks as commanding
“ as though he sat among
“ women and children!”

The

The knights now took the oath of fidelity to their new chief; he then demanded of them what were their wants? "we want provisions, soldiers, arms, and money," cried different voices.

"Here is that which will supply you," said Tigerhielm, taking from under his robes a profusion of gold, with which he spread the table. "If this is not sufficient," continued he, "name the sum—and ye shall be supplied."

The knights were silent through fear and astonishment; they looked upon Tigerhielm in that midnight hour—they were struck with the awful character of his countenance; and heated as their minds were by religious enthusiasm, and visionary projects, they believed that the Lord had favoured their undertaking, and had endowed with extraordinary powers,

powers, him whom he had raised up to be the champion of their faith. As soon as they had recovered from their surprize, they counted the sum of gold, and found it to exceed their present wants. Plenty now reigned in Riddarholmen, the soldiers became pacified, and the discontented knights were held in awe by the miracles performed by this extraordinary man. At every sitting of the council at midnight, Tigerhielm deposited the same sum of gold before them, which was more in value than any private fortune could supply. Their astonishment at this never failing treasure was intense, but none dared to question their haughty chief upon the subject. Some said that he had discovered the philosopher's stone—others that he was a prophet who performed miracles—while not a few believed that it was the evil spirit himself, sent to

tempt them into wickedness, and betray them into damnation. Tigerhielm sometimes upbraided them with entertaining surmises to his prejudice; but he never condescended to enlighten them with regard to himself—he dwelt in darkness and obscurity—and his proceedings were veiled in mystery. No one was aware of the moment he might appear among them—all obstacles disappeared before him—bolts and bars seemed to fly back at his approach—and in the moments of his anger, his appearance was abrupt, terrible and mysterious. The terrible energy of his character shone with full power and effect when he appeared at the head of the White Cross Knights, whom he always led on to victory. Night was their day,—and at midnight they emerged from their secret recesses, and scoured the country.

Several successful and secret attacks
were

were made on the troops of John III., who fled in dismay, and knew not how to cope or where to encounter this swift and secret enemy. The White Cross Knights made forced marches in the night, and the most active of the partisans of the catholic party were carried off from their castles in the remote extremities of the kingdom and immured no one knew where. The awful denunciations which condemned their foes and exposed them to their poignards, were posted up in the most public places, and so daring were their attempts, that a threat was conveyed into the secret recesses of the king's palace, and met his eye on the council-table when surrounded by those barons whom his fears had suddenly assembled. But their exploits, however severe and appalling to their enemies, were always conducted, according to the laws of honour and of

N 2 . knight hood.

knighthood. In all their expeditions under their new chief, the natural protection of age and sex was respected as a sacred barrier, which no true and honourable knight ever dared to violate : and although the affrighted and superstitious peasants, alarmed at the strange appearance of their white mantles, and surprised by the velocity of their movements, often hailed them as celestial spirits as they passed, or sometimes deprecated them as demons; yet so great was the forbearance of the warriors, and so strict their discipline, that, they never ascribed to them the passions and appetites of frail and sinful mortality.

Wildebrand, who was inducted by Brunot into the mysteries of the conspiracy, had joined it chiefly from the hopes it afforded him of forwarding his designs respecting Edda, and accomplishing those projects of revenge which

which he meditated against his rival Adolphus. But his disappointment may be easily imagined, when Montbazon would not comply with his urgent request to be admitted into the presence of her he loved, and even withheld from him all information of the place of her concealment. Burning with anger and revenge, it was he who first sowed the seeds of dissention among the White Cross Knights; and while he sought by every means in his power to effect the disgrace of Montbazon, he never relaxed a moment in his search after Edda, whom he had every reason to suppose was concealed within the walls of Riddarholmen. So securely was Edda placed, owing to the knowledge which Montbazon had acquired of the secret passes of the castle, that she had eluded the search of this unprincipled man, until the night on which Adolphus unfortu-

nately wandered through those parts of the castle which were in the possession of the knights. This happened shortly after the disgrace of Montbazon, who, from his want of influence among the knights, was now doubly anxious to keep Edda's retreat from their knowledge.

Among those knights who had pursued Adolphus was Wildebrand, who had instantly recognized the figure of his rival. His rage and jealousy may be easily imagined when he beheld Adolphus and Edda in the picture gallery, ascending through the frame of Sigismund's portrait. Fortunately his was the only eye which had beheld them; his account therefore, unsupported by any other testimony, was scarcely credited by the council, who were however induced by Wildebrand to issue an order, that the avenue leading to Sigismund's portrait should be searched

searched, and all those who might be found there concealed, brought before them. Montbazon had taken the precaution (the moment he had ascertained from Edda the possibility of Adolphus having been detected in his mode of escape,) to remove the portrait of Sigismund and fix another in its place. The knights, who never visited that part of the castle, did not observe the alteration in a gallery which was crowded with pictures, and on forcing the portrait of Sigismund from its frame, they found it concealed the top of a circular recess, whose extreme depth no light could penetrate, and which was the remains of one of those wells springing from under the foundation of the castle, which was intended formerly to supply it with water in case of siege. It was certain death for any of them to encounter the stagnant air of this well:

it remained therefore unsearched; and Wildbrand, cursing his rival, and his own fate, was obliged to give up all hopes of further pursuit. He was still convinced however that some deception had been practised on him, and he watched every avenue of the castle, and penetrated into many of the secret passages with which it abounded.

In making these efforts he discovered a secret way leading from one of the deepest recesses of the knights' subterraneous dwelling and opening through the statue of St. Bridget into the ruins of the abbey. He did not communicate this discovery to his companions; he reserved it for a purpose which he had long and secretly meditated. He was concealed within the statue, when he heard from the chapel the voice of Rezzonico in conversation with a Franciscan monk. Rezzonico had but lately

lately arrived: it was just after the fatal destruction of Count Mörner's château of Cronberg; and he had come to investigate the state of the abbey, and to calculate the probable extent of repairs, 'ere he came to take possession in the full pomp and dignity of his newly acquired preferment. The conversation which Wildebrand heard, alarmed him. The King's irrevocable determination to abide in the catholic faith was triumphantly mentioned: his immense exertions in raising new levies was praised and discussed; and the speedy extermination of the White Cross Knights fervently desired, and confidently predicted. Little did Rezzonico dream, that one who bore that dreaded name was within hearing of him, and that he was surrounded on every side by their fearful bands! The knights, however, were apprised, that a few poor Fran-

ciscan friars had taken refuge in the ruined cloisters; but engaged in the contemplation of greater designs, they did not seek to destroy these feeble insects whom they despised, and whom they knew would be crushed in the fall of the pillar of the state. Those whom the humanity of Tigerhielm first spared, the treachery of Wildebrand afterwards protected; and they remained in the fatal spot, entirely ignorant of their danger.

Wildebrand's mind was not of the visionary cast of his associates; he was actuated at present by no other object than the desire of gratifying his passions. Regardless of the most sacred oaths, and trampling on every principle of honor, he would have devoted himself to whatever party that could give Edda to him, as the reward of his treason. The cowl and the surplice he held in equal contempt, and
he

he took little delight in those disputes and perplexing controversies respecting the knotty points of faith, which so much engaged the attention of his associates. He immediately recollected the voice Rezzonico, whom chance had introduced him to at Hamburgh. Their object at that time was the same, —the destruction of Adolphus: and by this bond their friendship was cemented. Wildebrand now visited the monk in secret, but without as yet compromising his associates, or giving any hint of their designs. To watch his secret interviews, which she apprehended boded no good to the White Cross Knights, was the purpose of Christina, who had followed him through the passage of the statue; a way she was well acquainted with; and which was formed by the monks, in the day of their saint's prosperity,

to practice their pious frauds, and send forth oracles from their wooden God.

Christina had been seduced some years before, by that Baron Kruzen whom we have already mentioned. He had not yet thought proper to reward her fidelity by the matrimonial tie, and Carl was indignant that he had not fulfilled the promise he had solemnly given to his sister. He endeavoured to dissuade Christina from holding any further intercourse with the Baron, without effect; and he now resolved to watch her footsteps, and he took up his abode for some days in the abbey. When he beheld Christina waiting, and a knight approaching her, he needed no further proof of its being Kruzen, and this led him to execute the plan of revenge which we have already related. It is not surprising that the mistress of Kruzen

(one of the first who erected the banner of the cross) should be in some degree initiated in the secrets of the confederacy. From the love she bore the Baron, she became attached to the institution he had contributed to form ; and many trifling circumstances led her to suspect the treachery of Wildebrand. It happened that at the time Adolphus was siezed by Wildebrand, Tigerhielm was absent on a distant expedition with some of the bravest knights. Kruzen had been nominated to the command of Riddarholmen during his absence ; but in consequence of his being attacked with a severe illness, the effects of a neglected wound, the command devolved upon Wildebrand. Wildebrand's disposition was of a nature that spurned at all authority. His restless and dissatisfied mind could not bear the wholesome restraint of discipline

cipline, nor the necessary controul of a chief; and he envied the man whom he had not sufficient virtue to emulate.

There was one circumstance however, which contributed to increase Wildebrand's dislike of Tigerhielm, which he carefully concealed from his associates. He recollected at the first glance, that he had seen the face of this chief before; and after some painful reflection, he remembered it was at the *Fontaine d'Or*, at Leipzig, that he had seen this man in the assumed character of the Hungarian Jew—that old conjurer, as he termed him, who had publicly disgraced him. He was convinced then, that Tigerhielm and the Hungarian Jew was one and the same person; but he found it difficult to reconcile the difference of their ages. The Jew appeared to be four-score; and bent beneath the weight of years

years and infirmities. Tigerhielm was not much above half that age, and he was as upright and muscular as an Hercules. Wildebrand at length resolved this difficult point entirely to his own satisfaction, by deciding that the Hungarian was in possession of the secret of the philosopher's stone and elixir vitæ, and by taking a draught of the latter, he could at pleasure restore himself to the vigour of his youth. Wildebrand was credulous, and having often heard of the possibility of this grand discovery, he was now convinced that this new chief owed all his fame and power solely to the possession of this wonderful secret: that secrecy and mystery with which all the operations of Tigerhielm were conducted, could have no other source than in this cause.

An extraordinary scene of ambition now unfolded itself to Wildebrand's mind:

mind : he burned to become possessed of Tigerhielm's secret of inexhaustible riches and eternal life—and of Edda to share his wealth and bless his fortune : by these means he would throw into shade the lustre of his ancestors, and become the most powerful of the princes of Zaremberg. The difficulty of effecting his design stared him in the face. He considered, however, that although the frame of Tigerhielm might be so renewed by his art, as to last for ever, yet that it could not be invulnerable to sudden death. He conceived it extremely probable that Tigerhielm carried about his own person the valuable secret ; but it was the fear that he did not, and his dread lest so precious an art should expire with him, that preserved the chief from this assassin's poison or murderous steel.

While Wildebrand revolved in his own mind these schemes of future ambition,

ambition, the circumstance occurred, which we have related in the last chapter: an event which seemed to promise him the favourable termination of his plans; for he looked upon the capture of Adolphus as the forerunner of his success.

CHAP. XI.

Lasciate ogni speranza, voi che 'ntrate. DANTE.

All hope abandon ye who enter here.

THE orders of Wildebrand were instantly obeyed, and Adolphus, supported on the shoulders of several armed men, was rapidly borne through the ruins of the cloisters. They set down their burthen before a small portal, and knocked with their swords against an iron door. A hoarse voice from within demanded gruffly, who knocked? " 'Tis Otter," replied one of the guards. " Then enter," said the voice within, and the door flew open. They made Adolphus stoop his head as he passed through the low and narrow

narrow aperture: "now descend," cried his guards. Adolphus felt himself on the brink of a flight of narrow stone stairs. Two and forty steps he descended from the surface of the earth to the recesses of his solitary prison. After having proceeded for some distance along a passage, whose dismal echoes repeating the footsteps of his guards and the clang of their arms struck a cold fear on the heart of Adolphus, they stopped before a cell, removed the bandage from his eyes, and unbound his arms. One of the guards who attended him struck a light and set a lamp a burning which hung against the wall in a corner of the cell; he then lifted a heavy heap of chains which were rivetted at one extremity into a staple driven into the wall, and he fastened the other end of them to the wrist of Adolphus.

Adolphus looked round and survey-

• • • ed

ed his miserable dungeón. The walls were old and damp — the moisture nourished the fungous excrescences and slimy filth, which threw out noxious and poisonous exhalations, while rats and toads peeped out from the broken crevices. The heavy and loathsome air threw a chill over the brave heart of Adolphus. He reclined himself in silent sorrow against the side of his dungeon, and gazed on his chains while his tears dropped on them. He felt himself sick at heart, and the exertions which he had made in his resistance had overpowered his body with fatigue. His guards had left him to the melancholy reflections of his heart, and the only sound which disturbed his reverie was the measured foot-fall of the centinel who paced the passage on the outside of his dungeon.

After some time had elapsed, a noise in his dungeon roused him from his melancholy

melancholy reflections. He looked up and started when he beheld the figure which stood opposite to him. It was a dwarf of about four feet high, whose immense bony and unwieldy head exaggerated the diminutive proportions of his figure. His coarse and repulsive features were destitute almost of human expression. It seemed like an attempt of nature in her most wayward mood, and playing with her worst materials to give a rude and unfinished outline of a satyr. But from the chaos of his countenance there was no feeling to be extracted which could denote the presence of an immortal soul within. The passions which crossed his sallow visage, and at times marked something of their character on it, were only the groveling and brutal calls of instinct. A resemblance might be traced in this being to the swoln and beastly Indian idol, whose chariot wheels

wheels roll in blood over the prostrate bodies of its worshippers, or to that god of rudely sculptured stone which is erected in the valleys of the north, and when the moon shines on it, seems to frown terrific on the timid and prostrate Laplander, who pays to it his superstitious homage. His face was marked with scars, and his bleared eyes rolled wildly in their sockets; his hair which was of a sickly red, was parted in one seam at the top, and hung down to his shoulders on each side in filthy masses; his coat was made of leather and lined with sheepskin, and a broad belt was buckled round his waist, in which two large pistols were stuck: a sword almost as long as himself hung from his belt, and completed his formidable appearance. He grinned with savage delight when he looked upon Adolphus, and the rattling of his protruding shark's teeth, as he chuckled with

with pleasure, resembled the chattering of an ape. He made several attempts to speak, but so much was he overcome with intoxication, that with difficulty he stammered out, "Otter
" is quite rejoiced to s—ee you here
" at last. I swore that I would catch
" you and make you pay for your
" p—p—p—peeping."

"Is this some fiend of hell," cried Adolphus, struck with horror, "sent
" to torment me for my sins?"

"Come, come," said Otter, "no
" com—com—pliments; I am glad
" to, to, to see you here."

"Wretch! begone!" cried Adolphus; "if I am to suffer, let not my
" last hours be disturbed by this cruel
" mockery of a devil in scarcely hu-
" man shape."

"If you would spend these last mo-
" ments in peace," replied Otter,
" you would do well to treat me with
" a little

“ a little more respect, ‘and make me
“ your friend.”

“ Friend !. . . respect !” . . . repeated Adolphus ironically.

“ Hast any gold ? hast any du—
“ du—ducats ?” demanded Otter.

“ I have none,” replied Adolphus.

“ Ha !”—exclaimed Otter, with a savage grin which extended his mouth from ear to ear.

A thought now glanced on the mind of Adolphus, that it was possible to mould even the mind of this demon to a good purpose by the operation of the powerful vice which seemed to sway him—avarice might lure him from the scent of the blood.

“ Suppose then for a moment,” said Adolphus, “ that I have wealth
“ sufficient to satisfy the utmost crav-
“ ~~ings~~ings of your avaricious soul, what
“ service is it in your power to render
“ me ? Can you set me free ? Give

“ me

“ me my liberty, and a rich re-
ward !”

“ Reward !” interrupted Otter ;
“ shew me how it may be possible—
“ my protection—a key to all the
“ fastenings of your prison, you see,”
cried Otter, shewing it, and endeavouring to soften the ferocity of his countenance into a gracious smile,
“ you see it is a master-key.”

“ Then this boon shall be thine,”
cried Adolphus, taking off from his finger his diamond ring. It was the same ring which the good Axel Olof refused to accept from him, and Adolphus sighed bitterly while he gazed on it, for it was his father’s ring, and he felt he might never see it more.

“ What, that glass toy !” exclaimed Otter, as he advanced hastily to Adolphus. He adroitly snatched the ring out of the hand of Adolphus and held it up to the lamp. “ By the cross of

“ Christ, it sparkles prettily; and now
“ you shall see,” said Otter, “ that I am
“ a man of my word.” Otter advanced
towards Adolphus with an expressive
grin, and applied a key to the iron
band which confined his wrist; the
chains instantly fell to the ground,
and Adolphus felt himself immediately
relieved on being freed from their
weight. “ Now then,” said Otter,
“ follow me, but speak not.”

Otter threw the massive door of the
dungeon back upon its hinges, with
scarcely any exertion of his prodigious
strength. On the outside passage
two torches of pine lay burning. He
gave one of these to Adolphus; and
after whispering some words in the
ear of the sentinel, which Adolphus
could not hear, he seized the other
between his teeth, and grasping in his
hands a heavy iron bar, he proceeded
down

down the passage followed by Adolphus.

By the light of his torch, which flashed along the gloomy walls, Adolphus examined the interior of this extraordinary place. The passage was regularly arched; and from the large masses of stone which were employed, their peculiar time-worn form and the deep green tints which mottled their furrowed surface, the construction of this subterraneous prison must have been a work of great antiquity. It appeared to be one of those dreadful places of confinement which were generally the appendages of monastic institutions. Here, no doubt, the most cruel scenes of torture were devised and practised on their victims, by unrelenting fiends who profaned the rites and ceremonies of the Holy One, in the pursuit of those sinful excesses where either bigotry, avarice, or lust, predominated,

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predominated, and inflicted on those who resisted them the severest of all punishments—a protracted and lingering death, in God's name. On each side were low doors bossed with iron, leading into the cells of the condemned, and similar to that in which Adolphus had been confined. Otter, who complained of the tardiness of Adolphus, now vented on him the grossest abuse, and bade him increase his speed, for they had a good way to go before they arrived at the place of their destination. While he was talking, Adolphus was near slipping in descending three or four stone steps which led to a turn in the passage. He instantly recollected that on his being led to the cell there were no steps on the way; it was evident therefore that Otter was leading him a contrary way, and perhaps deceiving him. He gave a hint of his suspicions to Otter, who
turned

turned round and gave him an angry glance.

“ Thunder and lightning !” he vociferated, “ if it was to lakes of liquid
“ pitch and boiling brimstone, to the
“ lowest among the tortured damned
“ beneath hell’s burning throne, whither I lead thither should you follow
“ me !”

“ I have no doubt,” replied Adolphus gravely, “ but that you are well
“ acquainted with all the ways leading
“ to a place which your imagination
“ represents in such lively colours.”

Otter made no reply to this remark but by an angry and spiteful grin.

After proceeding for a considerable distance along the many turnings of this extended passage, they came to a place where it expanded into a small octagon and was crossed by a similarly vaulted passage. On the four angles which separated the passages, Adolphus

phus read an inscription on the walls in monkish Latin, which recommended confession to the tortured sufferer, and he shuddered at the reflections to which it gave rise.

In the centre of this place a large double trap-door was concealed in the ground. Otter immediately applied his key to the lock, and thrusting the iron bar into a large ring which was fastened to the top of the door, he used it against the ground as a lever, and raised the heavy trap-door with considerable difficulty. "Here," cried Otter, throwing the bar on the remaining half of the trap-door which remained closed, "here we must descend."

"An awful and solemn sound, like the rolling of distant thunder, rose from the bottom of the gulph which gawned before them, and then died away in gradually decreasing echoes.

"What

“What mean these awful sounds,” exclaimed Adolphus, while he leaned over the chasm and held forth the torch; but he explored it on every side with anxious eyes in vain, he could discover no bottom on which the ladder might be supported, and on every side of it rested thick and pitchy darkness.

“Otter, instead of answering him, gave him a look of contemptuous scorn, then seizing his bar and still grasping his torch between his teeth, he descended on the ladder and motioned Adolphus to follow him. It was a mode of descent perfectly new to him, and he placed his feet with caution, as the least slip would be fatal, for there was nothing to prevent his falling into the gulph below him. The ladder was formed of several boards nailed together, on which cross pieces of wood were fastened to receive

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the foot. The wild and grotesque figure of Otter, who descended boldly, brandishing the iron bar in the air, gave a still more terrific aspect to this subterranean gulph. His figure accorded in perfect character with all the horror of this scene, and he seemed to be an appropriate inhabitant of this gloomy world. The glare of the torch, which now and then threw but fitful flashes of light, magnified his dark outline, and he resembled a descending spirit of the host of fallen angels, who, crushed and bruised beneath the armour of the celestials, seeks to smooth his ruffled plumes beneath the iron arch of Pandemonium.

Adolphus could now discern the rock on which the ladder rested. Otter leaped fearlessly on it, but Adolphus walked with caution. There was no defence on the side where the frightful abyss still deepened to a length.

length which seemed infinite. A sound was heard gathering at the bottom of it, and it filled the ears of Adolphus like the rushing of a mighty wind. While Otter trimmed his torch, Adolphus examined the place around him with greater accuracy. The path on which they stood was cut in the solid rock, which rose above his head in the form of an immense arch seeking to embrace a similar one on the other side of the chasm. It was rent in many places by a number of deeply indented irregular fissures, and bore in its recesses the marks of many years labour in pursuit of that wealth which this place once contained. It was the interior of a silver mine; it had been deserted and let go to ruin by the proprietors many ages before, who imagined that they had exhausted the rich veins of silver ore, which at that time barely yielded what was sufficient to

pay for the labour of the miners. In many places the exceeding lustre of the strata might be discerned, and the richly variegated colours of the earth, the rock, and the ore, playing with changeable hues, like the varied brilliancy of the diamond, when the glare of their pine-torches fell on them as they passed, formed a singularly beautiful spectacle.

The sensations of Adolphus, however, at this moment were not such as would allow him to enjoy this singular scene. He now repented his having thrown himself on the protection of the villain who accompanied him; a wretch who, perhaps, led him thither in order to execute his sanguinary purpose with the greater secrecy, and with the intention of concealing his deed, by committing his body to that gulph where the beam of day could never visit it. He felt convinced of
the

the treachery of Otter, and he revolved in his own mind a terrible purpose, the dreadful effort of one who makes the last struggle for existence, and endeavours to grasp at that shadow of hope which seems about to vanish for ever from his view. Yet Adolphus was perfectly convinced that in the cave, or in the cavern, he was not adequate to struggle with the strength of Otter's powerful arm. Although Otter was remarkably low in stature, yet his body was enormously large, and his arms massy and rugged with sinew and muscle; like the knotted branch of a stunted oak, which is ribbed by the folds of lusty creepers. His weapons too gave him a decided superiority, and Adolphus saw that to stratagem alone he could be indebted for his safety. They had quitted the path, which had led them through various arched passages of the mine to another

o 6 . . staircase

staircase of similar construction to the first ; the passage leading to this descent advanced from the side of the mine nearly towards the centre of its dark chasm, to the half of whose depth, Adolphus now judged, from an examination of the space above and below, they had arrived. The fragile and trembling bridge on which they stood, seemed to hang in air, and its rotten timbers shook beneath their tread.

“ Whither do you lead me ? ” cried Adolphus. “ Otter turned round with a significant look, but answered not. “ I will advance no further,” exclaimed Adolphus, anxiously looking round to see if the place would answer his purpose.

“ Thunder and lightning ! ” vociferated Otter in a voice which shook the vaulted mine to its centre, “ follow me,

“ me, and beware how you look behind you.”

“ Beware!” repeated a voice. Adolphus turned and looked behind him. He beheld to his utter dismay, a figure muffled in a dark robe, who held towards him the point of a drawn sword.

“ Treachery !” exclaimed Adolphus, rushing with all his might against Otter, in hopes to hurl him down the chasm. Otter was not prepared for this attack, he staggered, he reeled on the verge of the precipice. On the instant that Adolphus held him to the edge which overhung the gulph, and was about to precipitate him in so rapid a manner, that the figure whom he had left at some distance behind could not interfere with his assistance, a power unknown rescued him from this imminent danger. Otter rose instantly from the grasp of Adolphus, and was lifted on a part of
the

the bridge which bore him rapidly through the dark air to the roof of the mine. "Down with him, let him sink for ever," cried Otter, in a voice of thunder while he was ascending.

Adolphus felt the part on which he stood suddenly giving way, the stranger with the drawn sword leapt towards him, he sunk to the bottom of the mine with the velocity of lightning; and the only sounds he heard were the guilty curses of the demon Otter in his ascent, who seemed to float on the darkness with a wing of triumph; like Satan when he receives the victim of his insidious wiles with shouts and blasts, which make hell ring again.

When Adolphus was recovered from the concussion, which was occasioned by the rapidity of his descent, he felt his arm grasped by a powerful hand; he was led by his conductor towards
an

an arched passage, which opened horizontally from the bottom of the mine. The glimmering of a distant light guided their steps, it burned before a door, whose hinges were rivetted into the solid rock.

Here his conductor stopped and said, "No stranger has ever witnessed the interior of the apartment we are about to enter. You must suffer me to fix this bandage across your eyes." On seeing Adolphus start back in an attitude of resistance; "fear not," continued he, "no harm will betide."

The tone of this man's voice was softened into something like the expression of compassion, and Adolphus who felt himself utterly abandoned by any hope of resisting him successfully, now yielded to his demand. While he was tying on the bandage, the stranger gave Adolphus many charges to

to answer with truth to all' such questions, as he might be asked. The door was instantly opened on the prisoner being announced. Adolphus felt himself chilled on entering, and from the freshness of the air and the murmur of many voices conversing in low tones, he imagined he was in a spacious apartment, and stood before the arbiters of his fate. A voice now commanded him to answer the truth, on pain of death, to all such questions as might be demanded.

"What is my crime, and who are my accusers?" demanded Adolphus haughtily.

"You stand not here to question us," replied the same voice; "answer, what is your name and country?"

To this question Adolphus replied with some hesitation, "Adolphus, the son of the Count Magnus Mörner."

A buzz

A buzz of disapprobation now filled the assembly. There was a pause, during which the members seemed to confer together.

The same voice now demanded,
 “Is not the Count Mörner a mem-
 “ber of the church of Rome?”

Adolphus replied in the affirmative.

“Have you at any former time vi-
 “sited the vaults of the castle of Rid-
 “darholmen?”

“I have,” replied Adolphus.

“Declare what you then and there
 “beheld.”

“*Beheld!*” repeated Adolphus in confusion.

“Declare,” cried the same voice.

“A robber,” replied Adolphus,
 “who roused his band and pursued
 “me.”

“Did you see nothing else?” de-
 “manded the examiner.

Adolphus was silent, and when
 “ . . . asked

urged to an answer by his enquirer, he replied that he had not.

He was now questioned as to his mode of escape, but he replied that it was chance conducted him through passages, which he should not be able to find again.

A voice, which he knew to be Wildebrand's, now demanded what had become of the female, who assisted him in his escape? To this question Adolphus replied not.

The same question was repeated.

"I *know* you," replied Adolphus calmly.

"And I," exclaimed Wildebrand, "know you, and am acquainted with your dark crimes."

"Villain!" exclaimed Adolphus.

"Respect for our brother," exclaimed several voices at the same time.

As soon as the confusion, which now raged

raged in the assembly was quelled, an order was issued that Adolphus should be remanded to his cell. He was led from the vaulted chamber, and on his bandage being removed, he found himself in the custody of a new guard. He instantly recollected this man's face; he was one of the ruffians with whom he had fought in the cemetery, but he was the most humane of the two; and his character afforded a strange instance of the perversion of good principles by religious fanaticism. Hoffer led the way, and ordered Adolphus to take up the pine torch which lay burning on the floor.

Adolphus, whose feelings now mounted to the extreme of agony, requested Hoffer in urgent terms, to disclose to him whither they were now about to proceed, and what was likely to be the result of the decision of his unknown judges?

“ You are remanded to your pri-

• • •
“ son,

son," replied Hoffer, "of the rest
"I am ignorant." He said this in a
gruff and surly tone of voice, and they
pursued their way, Hoffer preserving
a mysterious and gloomy silence.

Adolphus followed him without any
attempt at further question. On
reaching the bottom of the mine,
Hoffer ordered him to step on a small
wooden frame which lay on the ground.
Adolphus placed himself on it, and
Hoffer, who stood by his side, took out
of his belt a pistol and instantly fired
it through the dark cavity of the mine,
which rose above them. Echoes of
pealing thunder followed its report;
and when the lessening sounds follow-
ed each other more faintly, Adolphus,
whose attention had been roused by
the sublime effect of those sounds
which seemed to shake the bowels of
the earth, felt himself gently raised
along with Hoffer on the platform.
He

He now perceived the ropes which were attached to the machine, which quickly explained to him that this was a common mode of conveyance for both the miners and the ore.

The machine now ascending more rapidly, their torches threw a gleam of fire on the sparry incrustations and gem-like brilliancy of the various coloured veins of ore, which shot rapidly by them, meandering in many forms, through their dark and rocky bed; like the forked lightning playing on the surface of a black and sullen cloud. In the middle of their ascent, Adolphus perceived an approaching light, and when it broke through the blue fog which hung over the concave of the mine, he discerned a machine descending, similar to that in which he was borne. On its nearer approach, he discerned it was filled with armed men: the glare and smoke of their
torches

torches threw a pale and sickly hue over their stern and cadaverous features, as they passed him. Like guilty shadows they flitted along; no sound proclaimed their existence: they spoke not, nor did they greet Hoffer as they passed: in deep silence they descended, and in a few minutes vanished entirely in the gloom which was below them.

They were now arrived at the central part of the mine; here they quitted their ærial conveyance, and Adolphus passively followed Hoffer through nearly the same passages as Otter had conducted him in his descent. On arriving at the trap-doors which concealed and guarded this entrance of the mine, Hoffer at last broke silence, by exclaiming against the carelessness of his companions, the same, whom they had passed in their descent, who left the doors open.

“ By

“ By St. Eric,” cried Hoffler, “ they
“ have no regard for the bones and
“ necks of their fellows;—there would
“ be a pretty jump to eternity — a
“ poor devil woud’nt have time to
“ repeat a prayer before he soused to
“ the bottom.” Hoffler now mutter-
ed an inward prayer to himself while
they proceeded along a vaulted pas-
sage.

On entering his hated dungeon
again, Adolphus endeavoured to excite
the compassion of Hoffler in his fa-
vour; and with all the eloquence of
which he was master, he represented
to him his innocence of any crime
towards his employers, and sought to
win him to his purpose: but it was in
vain that he built this baseless fabric
of hope on the religious feelings which
seemed to animate the breast of Hoffler.
He fastened the heavy chains to the
wrist of Adolphus with the satisfac-
tion

tion of one who feels that he has fulfilled his duty. "No," exclaimed he, "no one can lay at my door the sin of treason or treachery towards my chiefs."

Adolphus endeavoured to reason with this extraordinary casuist: he represented to him the injustice, of which his employers were guilty, and he endeavoured to convince Hoffler, that in case they should put him to death, that he would be guilty of participating in the sin of murder. He touched then slightly on the reward which would be the consequence of his liberation; but Hoffler interrupted him with the anger of one who reproaches his tempter.—"Not for worlds!" exclaimed he; he then added, solemnly, "I have taken an oath! 'tis registered in heaven! the very terms of which would make thy hair bolt upright, and call down the viewless

“ viewless spirits of air who witnessed
 “ it!—the wealth of worlds would not
 “ purchase the penalty of this oath—
 “ no not the riches of all that lies in
 “ the power of our mighty chief! . . .
 “ I have said too much ; this comes
 “ of talking. Now, in the name of
 “ God!” cried Hoffer, while he turned
 the key which closed the lock of
 his chains, “ in the name of God!
 “ be patient, be patient.” Hoffer gathered
 in his arms a wisp of damp and
 musty straw which lay in a corner of
 the dungeon, and he strewed it where
 Adolphus stood, over the pavement.

“ It seems then this dungeon had
 “ an inhabitant lately,” said Adol-
 phus, looking at the straw ; “ may I
 “ ask,” continued he, “ what became
 “ of him ?”

“ God rest his soul !” muttered
 Hoffer.

“ He is then dead,” sighed Adol-
 VOL. II. P phus.

phus. Hoffer made no reply but shook his head.

A pitcher of water, a horn to drink out of, and some cakes of hard barley bread, lay in a little recess in the wall. Hoffer pointed them out to Adolphus, who said—"I feel very very faint
 " —I could wish, but yet I fear to
 " make this request."

"Name it," said Hoffer kindly.

"A little wine," said Adolphus,
 "may recruit my strength, and prevent the unwholesome damps of
 " this dungeon from destroying my
 " health."

"Wine I have none," replied Hoffer, "and at this time of night I cannot procure it,—but my duty does not forbid me to do this for you;" he continued in a good-natured tone of voice: "this flask of brandy," taking it from his belt, "was Hoffer's store to keep the frost from plucking
 " ing

“ing off a nose or an ear this night
“—take it, it is yours—no thanks,”
said he, stopping the effusions of gratitude which Adolphus was about to utter.

“You have saved my life!” replied Adolphus with a faint smile.

“No, not yet!” muttered Hoffer to himself. The tone in which he said this was so expressive of kindness, that Adolphus felt his hopes once more rising.

A horn now sounded at a distance and three shrill and lengthened blasts, filled the roof with lengthened echoes. Clouds again gathered on Hoffer’s gloomy brow. “He is arrived then,” said he, “I can stand no longer chattering here—farewell; and remember, be patient—in God’s name, be patient!”

Adolphus now asked who was arrived, and whether his fate would be

influenced by this arrival, with sundry other questions. Hoffer turned towards him a look repressive of his curiosity ; he answered not, but instantly quitted the dungeon, and drew outside the massive bars which secured the iron door.

Adolphus was now abandoned to the torture of his own reflections ; he reviewed successively the alarming events of the night, and he now reproached himself for venturing into the unhallowed domains of his forefathers. Every event which had occurred to him at Riddarholmen had been either actually pregnant with danger, or had foreboded to him the prospect of interminable misfortune ; every step he had taken had involved him in some greater danger or deeper mystery. The scenes he had witnessed in the chambers of the castle had almost shaken those solid principles, which the study of scholastic philosophy

philosophy had early imprinted on his mind. The powers of reason become a vain boast when opposed by the evidence of the senses, and the most solid foundation of syllogistic argument must have been overthrown by these supernatural appearances, which he had so lately witnessed. His Edda too, his Edda in Riddarholmen, and perhaps fallen like himself into the power of Wildebrand. These were agonizing reflections; and yet he felt it impossible to repel the tide of evils which seemed about to overwhelm his mind. In the first struggle with misfortune, the mind possesses an elasticity, which enables it to contend with the enemies who would disturb its repose; but from the repeated accumulation of evil, the pressure becomes too great for the spring to bear, and a passive existence, a yielding up of all energy, a devotedness to the

wildest chimeras and darkest visions of fancy's brood, are generally the characteristics of that heart which yields itself a victim of despair. Such was nearly the outline of Adolphus's feelings at this period. At times faint hopes would arise of his deliverance, but immured in his gloomy prison and cut off from all communication with the upper world, the cold calculation of his despair soon extinguished them, and he yielded to that dark destiny, which had so fatally clouded the morning of his existence.

Several days were passed in the most wretched manner by Adolphus : the rapidity with which his thoughts at first circulated gave way to the apathy of a mind that is resigned its fate. Otter and Hoffer brought him his solitary meal by turns every evening at night-fall. Adolphus steeled himself against the hardened brutality of the former,
and

and at times felt cheered by the compassionate looks of the latter; but Höffler avoided to give Adolphus any encouragement in those conversations which he seemed so anxious to engage him in, as he feared, to use his own expression, "that the devil might owe him a spite, and that God might leave him without his protection, in the moment that would tempt him to betray his masters."

Adolphus had spent six days in this miserable state, when on the evening of the sixth day, while tossing on his bed of straw, he felt a hard substance in the straw beneath him. On seeking to disengage his wretched bed from what rendered it still more intolerable, he found it was owing to a pocket book, which had fallen, perhaps, from the prisoner of whom Höffler had spoken, and which had lain in the heap unnoticed until this moment.

Adolphus eagerly snatched it up and held it to the light of the lamp; it contained several papers and memorandums, but the damp had rendered the writing nearly illegible; there was now no time for further inspection, for he heard the foot-falls of the relief and the challenge of the sentinels about to be relieved. The bars of his dungeon were withdrawn, and he had just concealed the pocket-book in his bosom, when Otter stood before him. He threw down his miserable pittance with his usual brutality, and carefully examined every part of the dungeon. This was so unusual a measure, that Adolphus trembled, lest Otter might extend his search to him; but after a delay of some minutes, which seemed hours to Adolphus, Otter withdrew in gloomy disappointment, and Adolphus anxiously took out the pocket-book and once more commenced its examination.

mination. In the first page of the tablets the name of the owner had evidently been written. He made out with some difficulty the word *Gustaf*; the next word was *de*, but of the surname the only letters he could distinguish were the two first, *Za*, the remaining part of the name was totally obliterated. Several private memorandums were written in different leaves, which were rendered almost illegible by damp, and the few words which Adolphus could decypher were of an uninteresting nature. A fragment of a letter was in one of the pockets; the substance of the paper had been destroyed where it had been pressed by the hand in folding; however, in spite of the chasms, Adolphus read it as follows:—"Eleonora, it was impossible—I was restrained by the presence of the King—the Count's sus-
 P 5" "picious

“ picians now know where to fix ; when
“ he passed me in the antichamber
“ he threw on me a terrible look. Let
“ the lion roar, do I fear him ?—No,
“ Eleonora, I am ,no enthusiast ; I
“ am a cool casuist—I have given up
“ the faith which was dear to me,
“ only because it was the religion of
“ my ancestors. I have weeded from
“ my heart the errors of that faith ;
“ I have become a Lutheran from the
“ very spirit of truth, from belief,
“ from conviction. What you relate
“ is astonishing ; but I have no faith
“ in supernatural appéarances. The
“ powers of nature are wonderful !—
“ we behold the effects, but the causes
“ must always remain incomprehen-
“ sible to our weak and erring judg-
“ ments. In the powers of astrology
“ and magic to portend and regulate
“ events I have no faith ; believe me,
“ with

“ with regard to these occurrences
 “ which you refer to such powers,
 “ I still remain an unbeliever—
 “ and”

The remaining part of this manuscript was torn off, and Adolphus searched for it in vain. A small piece of paper, which was written on with a pencil, the marks of which appeared to be recent, attracted his attention. He read without difficulty the following fragments :

“ Few can avoid the potency of
 “ fate—yet all believe themselves the
 “ exception. It was so with me—bright
 “ rose the morning of my days, and
 “ blooming was my youth. I exulted
 “ in my strength, and said to myself
 “ with delight, this will last for ever.
 “ My raiment was of the costliest
 “ kind, and the labour of many hands
 “ ministered unto the luxuries of my
 P 6- “ table;

" table ; but who can avoid the path
 " of their destiny ? For, behold ! ex-
 " perience dictates this sad truth : a
 " miserable, aged and shrivelled hand
 " traces these characters ; and long
 " before they reach the eye of light,
 " that hand will have returned to its
 " native dust. My feeble body is
 " bound to an iron staple, and the
 " weight of my chains drag it down
 " to the earth—the fire of disease
 " courses through my veins, and the
 " points of my bones start through
 " the squalid rags which now cover
 " me. Mercy ! Count Mörker ! Mer-
 " cy ! Mercy ! "

" Roll on, roll on, ye inglorious
 " years ! convey me more rapidly to
 " the tomb ! Here was I immured
 " in the prime of my youth—the
 " sun rises, the sun sets, but round
 " me he never pours the flood of
 " his glory. For sixteen years my
 " eyes

“ eyes have never beheld him—these
 “ hands during that time have never
 “ felt the warm pressure of a friend.
 “ I have heard no sound of greeting
 “ save the hoarse voice of my keeper,
 “ who demands at every visit—Am I
 “ still alive? Hasten to me thou last
 “ refuge of the afflicted—oh! death!
 “ thou only can'st end my suffering.
 “ For me the dark tide of eternity
 “ possesses no terrors—I stand a soli-
 “ tary being on its strand, and invoke
 “ thy coming. How few among those
 “ who are called the happy of this
 “ world feel as I do—must we then
 “ become wretched before we can
 “ *think justly?*”.....

“ I committed one rash act—eter-
 “ nal and all powerful God! was
 “ it for this thou abandonest me?
 “ Is it possible that for one youth-
 “ ful error I am judged by thy all-
 “ seeing eye and condemned for ever?

“ Can

“ Can this fault be wiped away by
“ no expiation? They talk to me of
“ eternal pains and purgatory; have
“ I then had no sufferings? This
“ world to me was a hell and a pur-
“ gatory. Eternal God! pity me, and
“ put an end to my torture. Hark!
“ I hear sounds; it is the noise of re-
“ velry and merriment. Barbarians!
“ *they laugh, and I.*”

“ Eleonora, I repent me of my in-
“ credulity;—but that name, what re-
“ collections it excites. Sixteen years
“ ago how beautiful! Art thou then
“ dead? Are those eyes, in which ge-
“ nius, wit and beauty sparkled, are
“ they closed for ever? Yes, I must
“ believe it, for it was thy spirit that
“ appeared to me, and promised to ter-
“ minate my sufferings. Yes, I believe
“ now in the awful ministration of spi-
“ rits. It is there again, lovely as in my
“ dream.

“ dream. What an extraordinary
“ dream!—the means of terminating
“ my sufferings within my reach. It
“ cannot be—sixteen reckoning from
“ the bottom and sixteen across—it
“ is right, it is right! oh! eternal Pro-
“ vidence!”

Here the manuscript abruptly terminated. Among the other papers Adolphus could find no clue to unravel the fate of the miserable writer of these fragments. He felt his attention intensely excited by the perusal of these melancholy memorials; and he felt no doubt in his own mind but that the sufferings which this unfortunate prisoner had endured in that very dungeon had preyed upon his senses, and that perhaps he had destroyed himself in a fit of insanity. He read over the fragments again and again; and at times he imagined that the latter part of them, and the concluding

ing sentence in particular, might have alluded to some mode of escape. He examined the back wall of his dungeon, and he found the stones of which it was composed were all of equal size, and lay in exceeding straight lines. The construction of this wall was quite different from the ruinous appearance of the rest. But after the minutest investigation he was obliged to confess to himself that there existed no means of escape in that direction, although in one particular part of it his hopes had been greatly excited by finding it return a hollow sound when he struck it with part of his chains. He therefore reluctantly yielded to his first conclusion, and deprecated for himself the fate of the unfortunate captive.

Some nights after this occurrence, his attention was drawn by a rustling noise which ran along the bottom part
of

of the iron door of his prison. He expected every moment to see some of the noxious animals which abounded in his prison start forth; but to his infinite surprise, after his attention had been thus excited, a small slip of paper was thrust in under the door. Fortunately the length of his chain allowed him full liberty to reach it. On opening the paper he read these words: "Take courage;—thy deliverer is at hand;—keep this intelligence a secret from thy keepers, and destroy this paper when you read it.—"

There was no name attached to this singular communication. The handwriting was unknown to Adolphus, and he mused for some time, forming vague conjectures with respect to the writer. The only being in his present abode to whom he could attribute the slightest inclination to save him, was
Hoffer;

Hoffler ; but it was extremely improbable that he should adopt that mode of communication when he had an opportunity of conversing with him every second evening. Adolphus passed the time in great anxiety until Hoffler made his appearance, as it was his turn to bring him provisions. At the usual hour of midnight he entered the dungeon. Adolphus had never beheld him so dejected : he laid down the provisions without saying a word, and placed a flask of wine beside them. Adolphus offered him many hearty thanks for his kindness.

“ I deserve none,” exclaimed Hoffler, in a gloomy voice.

“ Nay, but my good friend,” said Adolphus, “ for the motive which influenced you in this act of kindness, “ I must thank you.”

“ Prepare your mind for something
“ decisive,”

“decisive,” said Hoffer, “the crisis of your fate is at hand.”

“I know it,” replied Adolphus, joyfully, who now imagined that he recognized the writer of the mysterious billet.

“You know it then,” replied Hoffer, turning towards him as he was quitting the dungeon; “have you no sins to answer for? why do you not pray?” said he bitterly, “is this the way you are prepared for death?”

“Death!” repeated Adolphus; but Hoffer was gone, and with him all hope of explanation and succour.

The hopes and fears in the bosom of Adolphus now contended with one another; he found it impossible to repress the latter, and could not entirely rest on the former. While he stood in extreme agitation, pondering on the darkness of his destiny, another billet

was

was thrown on the floor of his dungeon, after a similar signal as that which accompanied the former. He took it up with renewed hopes, and read as follows: "To-morrow night, " the hour after midnight, expect to " see me."

Adolphus gazed on the lines with rapture. "I shall then once more," said he, joyfully, "taste the sweets of " liberty! and these monsters will " be disappointed of their prey."

The ~~remaining~~ hours of the night passed heavily away. In anxious and breathless expectation Adolphus counted the lingering minutes of the following day. Absorbed in reflection, he paced the dungeon, as far as the length of his chain would allow; and during that weary interval the hard stones of his cell did not once pillow his head. He drank the wine which the good-
nature

nature of Höffler had supplied him with, and he found his spirits cheered, and his courage mounted and gave him that firmness which the approaching crisis of his fate demanded. He heard the relief which proclaimed the tenth hour of that eventful night. As the time was now approaching, he concealed the manuscript of the unfortunate prisoner in the lining of his cloak, to prevent his sacred sorrow becoming the gaze of the vulgar eye. He had scarcely accomplished its concealment, ere he heard the voice of many feet on the outside of his dungeon, and the sound which the rusty bolts of his door made in shooting back.

“ Courage !” said Adolpus to himself, “ it is my deliverer !”

The words were scarcely spoken, ere Otter entered followed by several guards. Their faces were disfigured
by

by scars, and their dark and bushy beards considerably heightened the savage effect of their countenances, which were umbered by the glare of the pine torches which they carried. Otter advanced triumphantly towards Adolphus, and whispered in his ear a word, at which he turned pale, and shuddered ! He was then freed from his chains, and placed between two guards. They marched him from his dungeon down the vaulted passage ; at the extremity of which a narrow flagged passage led to a kind of guard room. Thither they brought their prisoner. Otter now left him with the guards ; giving them a strict injunction to watch their prisoner closely ; while he attended on their chief for final orders : adding, that their lives should answer for the escape of Adolphus.

The door of the guard-room was
barred

was barred on the departure of Otter, and the wretched Adolphus sat down in a corner of the apartment. Of the guards, some stretched themselves at full length along the oaken benches; some applied themselves to their flasks of strong Swedish brandy; while others raised the slumbering embers of the hearth, and added fresh logs of pine, in order to beguile time, and cheat of its horrors the sad and dreary hour of so memorable a night.

END OF VOL. II.

